Library of Theological
Seminary Princeton.

LIBRARY
OF THE
Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.
BX 5037 .B5 1855 v.9
Bickersteth, Edward, 1786-
1850.
The works of the Rev. Edward
Bickersteth

THE WORKS

OF

THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH,

RECTOR OF WATTON, HERTS.

VOL. IX.

CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,
285 BROADWAY.
1855.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE HOLY SCRIPTURES	1
II.	THE GREAT GOD	21
III.	CREATION	42
IV.	PROVIDENCE	62
V.	REDEMPTION BY CHRIST	82
VI.	INTERCESSION OF CHRIST	103
VII.	THE HOLY SPIRIT	124
VIII.	THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT	144
IX.	CHRIST OUR LIFE	165
X.	CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES	187
XI.	CHRISTIAN GRACES	208
XII.	REPENTANCE AND FAITH	229
XIII.	CHRISTIAN HOLINESS	250
XIV.	AFFLICTIONS	271
XV.	THE CHRISTIAN CONFLICT	286
XVI.	SPIRITUAL JOY	296
XVII.	PRAYER	315
XVIII.	PRAISE	333
XIX.	THE CREED, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, AND LORD'S PRAYER	342
XX.	THE BOOK OF PRAYERS	378
XXI.	HINTS FOR PRAYER	441

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

https://archive.org/details/worksofrevedward09bick

TO

HIS DEAR PARISHIONERS, AT WATTON,

AMONG WHOM

HE HAS MINISTERED FOR EIGHT YEARS,

WITH A GRATEFUL SENSE

OF THEIR GENERAL KINDNESS TO HIMSELF,

AND WITH

A GROWING HOPE THAT HIS MINISTERIAL LABOURS AMONG

THEM MAY BE INCREASINGLY BLESSED

TO THEIR SPIRITUAL AND EVERLASTING GOOD,

THIS WORK

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY FOR THEIR USE,

AND CIRCULATED AMONG THEM,

AS IT WAS PUBLISHED FROM TIME TO TIME,

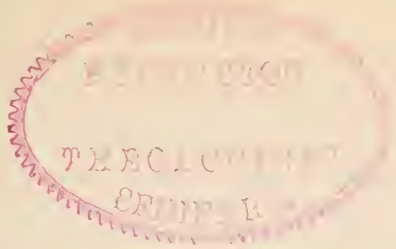
IS NOW

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY

THEIR FAITHFUL AND ATTACHED PASTOR,

THE AUTHOR.

October 15, 1838.



PREFACE.

The ignorance among many in this parish of the first principles of divine truth, and the importance of bringing that truth before them in a simple, easy, and devotional form, led the author to endeavour to prepare a series of tracts adapted to their situation. He had been in the habit of publishing a yearly address to his parishioners, referring to the past year, and, as he hoped, not without benefit. But it appeared to him that he might, by bringing before them the leading truths of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in occasional addresses, on a regular plan, more effectually promote their spiritual good. His "Christian Psalmody" afforded him an outline of those leading truths: and it was his design, from time to time, as God enabled him, in short, practical tracts, to endeavour to illustrate and apply, with as much plainness as he could use, the great truths of the gospel, in the order brought forward in that work. His immediate object was, that none under his charge should be without a plain and clear statement of those great principles of divine revelation which God has made known in his word for our salvation; and he hoped that it might please God to prosper this effort, not only for this immediate object, but for more extensive usefulness.

This work was commenced about four years since, and was originally published in separate numbers, and de-

signed for the author's poorer parishioners. It was entitled "The Cottagers' Guide to Christian Truth," but the author was induced to change that title on finding that a similar title had at the same time unconsciously been adopted by a beloved brother minister, the Rev. A. R. Dallas, for a very useful work on the New Testament. He was led to the present title, "Christian Truth, a Family Guide to the Chief Truths of the Gospel," as more adapted to the nature of the work as it grew under his writing it from year to year.

Should it please God to give him an opportunity, he purposes at some future time to add, as a second series, "The Christian Church, a Family Guide to the Church of Christ," in pursuance of his original plan, to follow the order of subjects laid out in his Christian Psalmody.

The author would venture to recommend the reading of a portion of a chapter by the Cottage or District Visitor to the poor once a week, or oftener, as a help to conversation with them : and possibly parents might find some assistance in conveying religious principles to their children in the same way. Questions might advantageously be proposed, on the portion read.

May it please the Father of mercies to bless the work, as a help to each reader's knowledge of divine truth, and an assistance in the most blessed and enriching of all duties and privileges, that of communion with himself.

EDWARD BICKERSTETH.

Watton Rectory, Herts,
Oct. 15, 1838.

PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY.

CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

1. The Bible is the word of God—2. What it contains—3. The Bible shows us what is to take place—4. How the Bible is to be read—5. Family Reading and Conversation—6. Prayers before and after reading—7. Useful Tables.

1. THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD.

THERE are many books in the world, but there is one of an entirely different character from every other, professing to be not the word of an erring human being, but the express and infallible word of the great God who made us.

It is called *The Bible*, which comes from a Greek word, meaning THE BOOK. It has a peculiar title to this name, as the one book of supreme importance and value: which, if duly regarded, brings the greatest advantage to us, and which cannot be neglected without the greatest danger and the most serious injury to our best interests. It is also called *Scripture*, which means THE WRITINGS, on account of its superiority to every other writing. When it was first given to man, printing was not known, and to distinguish these writings from all others, they were called *The Writings*. This book has the first of all possible claims on our attention, because by it God speaks to us. It is the

word of God : "Thus saith the Lord," may be inscribed on the Bible.

How may a poor man know that the Bible is the word of God ? Let us look around : who are those that profess to believe this, and who really endeavour to act according to the directions of the Bible ? Are they not persons of good character and integrity ? and the more they seek to live according to the Bible, are they not the more remarkable for uprightness, benevolence, and diligence in doing good to others ? Look next at those who disbelieve the Bible as the word of God, and we shall find that the more they reject the Bible, and speak against it, the more they are vain-glorious, disreputable, and selfish, and generally immoral in some part or other of their conduct.

Then open the Bible : see how, throughout, it condemns sin and falsehood, and all that our conscience tells us is wrong ; and how it declares that all "liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." It everywhere insists upon truth, righteousness, and all that our conscience tells us is right. It thus bears the mark and stamp of truth in every part. Bad men could not have written a book everywhere condemning all wickedness : it must have been written by good men.

Then think what the Bible says of itself. It expressly declares, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. iii. 16. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter i. 29. Good men would not, durst not, have imposed so monstrous a lie upon us as to call their own words the word of the living God, and to require all men to believe this, or be for ever ruined.

The glory of the Bible is, that it reveals, throughout, A SAVIOUR. It shows to us sinful creatures a way of free and complete deliverance from our sins, planned and executed by the great God himself, and to be proclaimed to every human being. The whole of this great salvation is so peculiar, so adapted to our wants, so above all the natural ideas of man, and so contrary to all his preju-

dices, as to furnish a strong evidence that the Bible is from God.

Look then at the different classes of men in the world. You see a singular people called THE JEWS, everywhere dispersed over the earth, claiming to be descended from their forefather Abraham. They have in their keeping one part of the Bible, called the Old Testament. They profess to have received it from the beginning as written by inspired prophets of their own nation. Their whole national history is bound up with the miracles, and history and truth of the Bible. They are our witnesses for the purity of the books which they believe. Especially it is clear that they would not have invented those parts which occur so frequently about their national crimes and sinfulness, and those PROPHECIES which so clearly foretel the history, sufferings, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom they have rejected. We may be certain, therefore, that it is a true record of historical facts, and that all these prophecies were written hundreds of years before our Lord came. God only could foresee and foretel future events. God has manifestly done so in the Old Testament, respecting Christ Jesus : here is one proof that it is the word of God.

Look again at another class of men in the world. You see millions of human beings professing to be CHRISTIANS. Christianity spreads over the most civilized and intelligent part of our globe. Whence did this arise ! The gospels and the Acts of the Apostles show you. They tell you of mighty MIRACLES, worthy of the glorious God, obvious to all, done in the broad day, before many thousands of witnesses, and such as their very senses made evident ; and of Christianity being founded on these wonderful facts. These miracles prove that the Bible is the word of God, and the very existence of Christianity proves the miracles.

Look at a still larger class of men, THE UNCONVERTED NATIONS of the earth ; and see how the want of the Bible is attended with innumerable evils. Among the heathen, where no ray of revealed light shines, the most debasing

idolatry, licentiousness, cruelty, and wickedness prevail. Among the Mahomedans, or followers of the false prophet Mahomet, but feeble remnants of revealed truth are left, and there despotism, oppression, and many abominable vices, mark their condition. In those lands where the mild and kind and purifying principles of the Bible are unknown, there invariably are, the greatest darkness as to the future state of man, the deepest degradation of women, and the most entire neglect of the poor. The system of other religions is a system of vice;—all manner of iniquity is sanctioned by them. "If the light that is in them be darkness, how great must that darkness be!" But the Bible denounces the most awful threatenings against all wickedness; and if Christians sin, they sin not according to their religion, but in spite of it. Just in proportion as the Bible is received and followed, just so much are the fruits of righteousness yielded by men to the glory of God and the good of their fellow-men.

These things, with much more that might be said, unite with one voice to testify that the Bible comes from God.

You may, however, each for yourselves, put the important fact, that the Bible is the word of God, to this very plain and simple test or trial. Read it daily, with much prayer to God, to teach you and sanctify you by it, and see if you do not become quite another man, born again through the word, and sanctified by the truth. God thus gives men experimental conviction of its power. Again, the Bible is full of gracious promises, to be fulfilled even in this life, to those who use the appointed means. Try the truth of those promises. God says, "Ask, and you shall have; seek, and you shall find.—He will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask." Perseveringly pray for the Holy Spirit, and you shall receive that Spirit, obtain the gift of saving faith, and have inward witness that the Bible is the word of God.

Should you be tempted, on opening the Bible, to imagine that God would speak to you in some other way, or tell you some other thing than he has told you, look at the

visible creation ; look at what you see with your eyes and hear with your ears, and witness all around you—are there not difficulties in natural things and in the daily course of the world, similar to those which you find in revealed things ? Do you not frequently meet with things for which you cannot account, and yet must believe ? Have you not often to acquire your knowledge in ways that you think at first difficult, and which are contrary to your preconceived ideas ? Shall the little child set up its own notions against the experienced parent ? Trust God, till you have, with deep reverence and in prayer, and according to his directions, diligently searched his word. You will, after doing this, obtain complete conviction that there are no real difficulties to hinder your believing the all-important fact that the Bible is the word of God ; that there is the fullest satisfaction of mind in receiving it as such, and in forming all your principles and regulating all your conduct by this blessed and holy volume.

Meditation.

O wonderful Book ? the Book of books ! does God, the great Creator and Lord of all, condescend to speak to me ! Is this his own word which he sends to shew me Himself, the work which he would have me to do, and the way to attain his favour ! With what diligence, with what reverence, should I read its sacred pages ! How thankful ought I to be for so rich a blessing ! What an unspeakable advantage to have such a means of knowing my God, such an infallible test of all human sentiments, and such a sure discovery to me of every thing that is most important for me to know ! All glory, all praise be to my heavenly Father, for this lamp to my feet, and this light to my path !

2. WHAT THE BIBLE CONTAINS.

It is divided into two parts ; the Old and the New Testament (2 Cor. iii. 6—14). They are called Old and New,

for the purpose of distinguishing the time when those parts were written ; the Old being written before the coming of Christ, and the New since his death. Testament means a will ; and viewed as a will, the Bible is full of gifts and blessings confirmed to believers by the death of the Testator.

There are thirty-nine books in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New. They were written at different times, by different inspired writers. Both Testaments begin with historical books, and then follow doctrinal and practical books, and both conclude with prophecies.

The first five books were chiefly written by Moses. They are the most ancient books in the world, being written above three thousand years since. The names of the writers of some of the historical books of the Old Testament are not certainly known. Most of the other books were written by the persons whose names they bear, or to whom they are usually ascribed, and the whole sacred volume was completed about one thousand seven hundred years since. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the language of the Jews, and the New Testament in Greek, the most generally known language when it was written. There have been from a very early age translations of the Bible into other languages, and this has greatly helped to preserve the whole sacred volume in its purity to this day. Our present English Bible was translated out of the Hebrew and Greek languages in the reign of our king James the First, and was published in 1611. The Bible, in all or in part, has been translated into nearly one hundred and sixty different languages, the chief known languages of the earth.

The Bible contains the history of man, from his creation to the end of the world, either by relating what is past, or by foretelling what is to come.

It begins with the creation of our first parents in the likeness of God, holy and happy—their fall from that happy state—the promise of the Redeemer—the sinfulness of the human race—their destruction by the deluge—the

preservation of Noah, and the new world's again falling away—the confusion of their tongues, and their being scattered abroad over the earth.

It then shews the call of Abraham, and the separation of a peculiar race as the depositories of the true religion, and the people from whom the Redeemer was to come. The history of this people takes up the largest part of the history of the Old Testament ; and in their experience we have a full developement of what man is, and what God is—what our duties are, and what our hopes are—what God will do for those who seek him, and how he will punish those who disobey him.

But chiefly there is set before us continually the great truths of our redemption, and full accounts of the person, life, character, sufferings, and glory of the divine Redeemer.

The New Testament continues this glorious theme ; containing four histories of the life of our Saviour, in the four gospels,—an account of the outpouring of the divine Spirit, and the commencement of the Christian church, in the Acts of the Apostles. Various epistles, or letters, written by them to the churches newly formed, or to private Christians, follow ; and it closes with the prophetic history of the church, in the book of Revelation, to the end of the world.

There is in the Bible the greatest variety, in the narrowest possible compass. In one volume we have the history of all ages, the most interesting lives of the best of men ; the most beautiful strains of poetry and imagination ; the most touching letters ; the clearest display of our duties to the one living and true God, and to all our fellow-creatures ; and the full discovery of the way of redemption from all our present sorrows, and of the path to endless life and glory. The veil that hangs over futurity is rent by his hand, who has all futurity in his direction ; and, we read in plain and simple language all those events which are to happen that it most concerns us to know. What a book is the Bible ! Study it incessantly.

Meditation.

Almighty Father ! how can I enough admire thy loving-kindness and condescension in thyself providing such a book for me ! Oh what darkness would have covered the earth, and would have covered my soul, but for this book ! Without it I should not have known how I came here, or where I was going, or who thou art, or how I can please thee, and escape misery, or be happy for ever. But all this is made plain to me now. And how can I praise thee enough for the precious volume ! Oh give me a sacred thirst after its blessed truths ! May they be very sweet to my taste, and the very joy of my heart !

3. THE BIBLE SHEWS US WHAT IS TO TAKE PLACE.

Does the Bible shew us things to come ? It does indeed ; and God has given us the greatest proof that all he has foretold, as yet to come, will take place, by having already brought to pass very many things which he also foretold. Such are—the state of all the world in the account of the three sons of Noah, the fall of the city of Babylon, the destruction of Jerusalem, the dispersion of the Jews over the world, the rise of four great monarchies, or universal empires. These things have been fulfilled in the sight of all men long since they were predicted ; and we are thus assured that all that God has foretold respecting things to come will also be fulfilled.

What has he, then, foretold as yet to take place ? To us INDIVIDUALLY there is much that is most important.

See what he says respecting DEATH :—" The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it." Eccles. xii. 7. The body put in the grave is not the end of man ; it is the beginning of another state of existence ; it is our going alone by ourselves before the great God who made us. Have you thought of this ? are you prepared for it ?

Then JUDGMENT is to take place. It is thus foretold :— "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil : every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Has this been much in your mind ? Has your great aim been this, that you may be accepted of the Lord in that day, and have confidence and "boldness in the day of judgment ! " 1 John iv. 17.

Then comes HELL for the wicked. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. There the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Have you ever thought duly of the horrors of God's wrath, and everlasting punishment, and dwelling for ever with the wicked ? Are you flying from the wrath to come ?

There is also THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM, in all its boundless bliss and unutterable glories, for the righteous ; there nothing that defiles, or works abomination, or makes a lie, shall ever enter ; are you thirsting after these glories, and seeking them first of all ?

To the WHOLE WORLD there is much also of vast importance.

The FALLING AWAY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, and the punishment of those who have fallen away (to take place at the coming of Christ), are clearly foretold, 2 Thess. i. ii., the Epistle of Jude, and the 2nd Epistle of Peter, and Revelations xvii. xviii. xix.

The CONVERSION and restoration of the Jews to their own land, and the blessed effect of this on the whole earth, are foretold in very many passages of God's word. See for instance Jer. xxxii. and xxxiii., Ezek. xxxvi. and xxxvii., and Romans xi.

The COMING AGAIN OF CHRIST, in power and great glory, is also plainly foretold, Acts i. 11. Matt. xxv. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. 2 Peter iii. 3—14 ; and many other places. No one can tell how soon this may take place ; but there is great danger in saying. and acting on the idea, "My Lord delayeth his coming," (Matt. xxiv. 48. 2 Peter iii. 3,) and a very great duty and blessedness to be wait-

ing, watching, and ready for his return (see Matt. xxiv. and xxv. Luke xvii. and xxi.); for his coming will take the world quite by surprise, as when a thief comes at night. Persons who are living together in the same occupation and the same house, and even sleeping in the same bed, shall then be separated as wide as the outer darkness and the everlasting glory. Oh, be ye ready, "for, in such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh."

The RESURRECTION of the dead saints, and the change of the living saints, at the coming of Christ, are again and again foretold; see 1 Cor. xv. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. Luke xiv. 14. Phil. iii. 11.

Our Lord Christ will also establish his GLORIOUS KINGDOM, and Satan shall be bound for a thousand years. Rev. xx. For the coming of this kingdom we daily pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." This has yet also to take place; and oh how blessed for our world that day, when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ." Rev. xi. 15. See Dan. ii. 44; vii. 13, 14. In this kingdom his saints shall reign with him. Dan. vii. 18, 27. Rev. v. 10, and xx. Luke xix, 11—27. 2 Tim. ii. 12.

The future loosing of Satan, and the final and general judgment of all the dead, with the everlasting punishment of the wicked in the lake of fire, and the everlasting glory of the blessed in the new heavens and the new earth, closes the wonderful accounts of what God has foretold as still to be done in our world.

Meditation.

O my soul, what great things has God foreshewn me as yet to take place,—things in which I have the deepest personal interest, and which call for my direct and immediate attention! These are things which should controul every thought I think, every word I speak, and every act I do. Am I to pass through all these scenes, and can I now escape God's wrath and attain his glory! Oh, may his Spirit shew me things to come, that my soul may be

strengthened to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, "if by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead."

4. HOW THE BIBLE IS TO BE READ.

The Bible is a large book, and consists of many parts. You may ask, where should I begin, and how should I carry it on?

It is not necessary to read the whole Bible in a limited time. There are some people on the earth that have not got the whole Bible. Some have only got the New Testament, some only one of the gospels, and some only one or two of the other books of Scripture; but a very small part of God's word may be blessed to our everlasting good. Through God's mercy the whole Bible is printed in our language. It is read in every parish church in our country every Sunday in the year, and a great deal of scriptural knowledge has been diffused over our country, so that very few need be altogether ignorant of the Bible.

But we will suppose that you have never read it in private before, and I will explain what may be the best way of beginning. There are some books so very profitable and instructive, and so full of the great truths which we want to know, that it may be very useful to begin with them—such as the following:—In the Old Testament, Genesis and Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, and Isaiah; and in the New Testament, Matthew, John, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians. You may begin a first easy course by going carefully through these books, reading a chapter morning and evening.

When you have gone through these books once, then begin again with the whole Bible, reading one chapter from one Testament in the morning, and another from the other Testament in the evening.

But the mere reading of the Bible, as we would any other book, for amusement or information, or to get a knowledge of its contents, is far short of the design for which the Scriptures were given. The chief design of the Bible is to "make us wise unto salvation, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and all Scripture is given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Now in order to the obtaining of this end, the Bible must be read in a different way to other books; and I will give you here two or three plain rules.

1. READ IT WITH CONSTANT PRAYER TO GOD. See in the 119th Psalm how much David prayed: "Lord, teach me thy statutes. Give me understanding, that I may know thy word." God has promised to teach us, and we must obtain this promised instruction through fervent prayer—prayer before we begin, prayer while reading, and prayer when it is over. The Holy Spirit is the only effectual teacher.

2. READ IT WITH MUCH MEDITATION,—thinking very patiently and deliberately over each verse; What does this teach me? How can I attain this promise? escape this threatening? fulfil this duty? be warned by this sad history? or be animated by this blessed example?

3. SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES TO DISCOVER THEIR TESTIMONY TO CHRIST JESUS. The Bible is the word of Christ; its leading design is to show us plainly and fully that gracious Redeemer, who having redeemed us from sin and ruin, invites us to receive his great salvation, and by whom, through the Spirit, we sinners can come with freedom to God, our most holy, merciful, and compassionate Father, who gave his Son to die for us.

4. READ THE BIBLE TO BE MADE HOLY BY IT.—Our Saviour prays for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." It is God's great instrument or means for making us holy, or separate from the

world, and devoted to God. Holy desires and feelings, and holy practice, are given to us in the humble, diligent, and devout study of the Bible. Since without holiness we shall never see God, or dwell with him, let us diligently read the Bible, to attain to holiness.

Meditation.

What an important work have I daily to fulfil in reading and meditating upon God's word, and how profitable is it! God has testified of the truly happy man, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night: and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper." Oh that this may be my character and my blessedness! I shall find many things to hinder me in this work, but let me resolutely, firmly, and steadily set aside everything that would interfere with the daily, patient reading of God's blessed word.

5. FAMILY READING, AND CONVERSATION ABOUT THE BIBLE.

Parents and heads of families have a great duty to fulfil with reference to the Bible. The name 'Family Bible' is a pleasing sound, and a very appropriate title for this holy book. It teaches us that the Bible is to be the great guide of the family, and the supreme rule of every Christian's house. The directions of the Bible are very clear and full on this duty: "Hear, therefore, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And

thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes."

Take up, then, Christian parents, Joshua's resolution—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Endeavour to fulfil these directions every day, by reading a part of God's word to your family, and in prayer with them, seeking his grace and blessing. It is the only way to have your children dutiful and obedient, and such as will give you comfort when they are grown up. No wonder so many parents' hearts are broken by the continued misconduct of their children, when they so grievously neglect God's directions in their education.

Meditation.

Blessed, O my soul! is that family of which God is the head and Father, and which is governed according to the rules of the gospel of Christ. Surely it is a protected and well-cultivated seed-plot, or nursery, where plants are training for a more beautiful garden, and to which they shall soon be transplanted, to flourish for ever in the paradise above. God make my family thus blessed, and let not one be wanting in the day when he counts up his children! God help me to live before them so as may lead to this blessed end, and let family reading, family prayer, and family singing, every morning and every evening, and the daily course of our conversation, mark my home as one of the dwellings of the righteous!

6. PRAYERS.

1. PRAYER BEFORE READING.—O Lord, help me to read thine own word with reverence, deep humility, and an earnest desire to do thy will. Remove all darkness from my understanding, and all perverseness from my will, and enable me to receive thy truth with the simplicity and teachableness of a child. Send thy blessed Spirit to guide me into all truth, to show to me the things of Christ, and to sanctify me by his truth. Give me grace

now and ever patiently to search, truly to believe, deeply to meditate upon, heartily to love, and unreservedly to obey thy word, that I may be made wise unto salvation, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. PRAYER AFTER READING.—Almighty Father, my God and my Saviour, I thank thee for the light of divine truth ; may it shine more and more in my heart unto the perfect day. Grant unto me an assured faith in my Redeemer, and write thy laws in my heart. Let no subtilty nor malice of the devil ; let not the world, nor any inward vain imaginations, proud reasonings, or corrupt affections, prevail to turn me from thy ways ; but let the power of the Holy Ghost make me to triumph over all temptation. Strengthen me heartily to embrace thy truth, stedfastly to hold fast the word of life, and faithfully to do thy will. O Lord ! direct my heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ. Hear me, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Prayer to be formed and moulded according to God's Holy Word.

Almighty Father ! my Maker, my Redeemer, my Sanctifier ! thy word is truth, and it will stand for ever ; and thou hast given that word that I may know and do thy will : but my mind is dark, and my heart is evil : give me, then, I beseech thee, thy all-sufficient help, to enlighten my understanding, purify my heart, and mould and fashion my whole inward man to be conformed to thy will.

O grant unto me such grace that thy threatenings may make me willing and obedient, and give with every example, whether of warning or imitation, its right and holy influence on my daily conduct.

And more especially grant me the Spirit of the Lord, that beholding in thy word, as in a glass, the glory of thy Son Jesus Christ, I may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

Thus may I be wholly delivered and moulded into the

form of doctrine which thou hast revealed for my salvation, and my whole life be formed and governed, not by the opinions of man, whose breath is in his nostrils, but by thy word. O my God, who liveth and abideth for ever ! Hear me, for the sake of Jesus Christ, my only Saviour.

7. USEFUL TABLES.

The following tables are added to assist you in finding places in the Bible which you may wish to read :—

1. *Table of Psalms.*

1. *Prayers.*—For pardon of sin—6, 25, 38, 51, 130
Penitential—6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143
When prevented attending public worship—42, 43, 63, 84
When dejected under afflictions—13, 22, 69, 77, 88, 143
Asking help of God—7, 17, 26, 35
Expressing trust in God in afflictions—3, 16, 27, 31, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 71, 86
Under affliction or persecution—44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 89, 94, 102, 129, 137
In trouble—4, 5, 11, 28, 41, 55, 59, 64, 79, 109, 120, 140, 141, 142
Intercession—20, 67, 122, 132, 134
2. *Thanksgivings for Mercies.*—To particular persons—9, 18, 22, 30, 34, 40, 75, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138, 144
To the Israelites—46, 48, 65, 66, 68, 76, 81, 85, 98, 105, 124, 126, 129, 135, 136, 149
3. *Psalms of Praise and Adoration displaying God's Attributes.*—His goodness and mercy, and care of good men—23, 34, 36, 91, 100, 103, 107, 117, 121, 145, 147
His power, majesty, glory, and other attributes—8, 19, 24, 29, 33, 47, 50, 65, 66, 76, 77, 93, 96, 97, 99, 103, 111, 113. 114, 115, 134. 139, 147, 148, 150
4. *Instructive Psalms.*—The characters of good and bad men, their happiness and misery—1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 50, 52, 53, 58, 73. 75, 82, 84, 91, 92. 94, 101, 112, 119, 121, 125, 127, 128, 131, 133
The excellency of God's law—19, 119
Vanity of human life—39, 49, 90
5. *Prophetical Psalms.*—2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68, 72, 87, 110, 118
6. *Historical Psalms.*—78, 105, 106, 135, 136.

2. OUR SAVIOUR'S PARABLES.

	Matt. c.	Matt. v.	Mark. c.	Mark. v.	Luke. c.	Luke. v.	John. c	John. v.
Candle under a bushel	5	15	4	21	11	33	—	
Single and evil eye	6	22	—		11	34	—	
On serving two masters	6	24	—		16	13	—	
Importunate friend	—		—		11	5	—	
Good and corrupt tree	7	16	—		6	43	—	
Blind leading the blind	15	14	—		6	39	—	
Two builders	7	24	—		6	47	—	
Children in the market-place	11	16	—		7	31	—	
Two debtors	—		—		7	41	—	
House divided against itself	12	25	3	25	11	17	—	
Strong man overcome	12	29	3	27	11	21	—	
The relapsing demoniac	12	43	—		11	24	—	
Rich man laying up treasures	—		—		12	16	—	
Servants waiting for their Lord	—		—		12	35	—	
The barren fig-tree	—		—		13	6	—	
The sower	13	3	4	3	8	5	—	
Tares and wheat	13	24	—		—		—	
Casting seed into the ground	—		4	26	—		—	
The mustard seed	13	31	4	30	13	18	—	
The leaven	13	33	—		13	20	—	
The hidden treasure	13	44	—		—		—	
Pearl of great price	13	45	—		—		—	
Not gathering of every kind	13	47	—		—		—	
Good householder	13	52	—		—		—	
New cloth and old garment	9	16	2	21	5	36	—	
New wine and old bottles	9	17	2	22	5	37	—	
Old wine better than new	—		—		5	39	—	
Unmerciful servant and debtor	18	23	—		—		—	
The shepherd and sheep	—		—		—		10	1
Vine and branches	—		—		—		15	1
Good Samaritan	—		—		10	30	—	
Guest choosing the highest seat	—		—		14	7	—	
The great supper	—		—		14	16	—	
Proposal for building a tower	—		—		14	28	—	
Of a king about to make war	—		—		14	31	—	
Salt and its savour	5	13	9	49	14	34	—	
Lost sheep	18	12	—		15	4	—	
Lost piece of silver	—		—		15	8	—	
Prodigal son	—		—		15	11	—	
Unjust Steward	—		—		16	1	—	
Rich man and Lazarus	—		—		16	19	—	
Master and servant	—		—		17	7	—	
Judge and widow	—		—		18	1	—	
Pharisee and publican	—		—		18	9	—	
Labourers in the vineyard	20	1	—		—		—	
The ten pounds	—		—		19	12	—	
Two sons commanded to work	21	28	—		—		—	
Wicked husbandmen	21	33	12	1	20	9	—	
The Wedding garment	22	2	—		—		—	
Fig-tree putting forth leaves	24	32	13	28	21	29	—	
Watching for the thief	24	43	—		12	39	—	
Man taking a far journey	—		13	34	—		—	
Faithful and unfaithful servant	24	45	—		12	42	—	
The ten virgins	25	1	—		—		—	
The talents	25	14	—		—		—	
The sheep and goats	25	31	—		—		—	

3. OUR SAVIOUR'S MIRACLES.

	Matt.		Mark.		Luke.		John.	
	c.	v.	c.	v.	c.	v.	c.	v.
Water turned into wine	—		—		—		2	1
Miracles done at the Passover	—		—		—		2	23
Nobleman's son restored	—		—		—		4	46
Jesus preserves his life	—		—		4	28	—	
Miraculous draught of fishes	—		—		5	1	21	6
An unclean spirit cast out	—		1	23	4	33	—	
Peter's wife's mother raised	8	14	1	29	4	38	—	
Many devils cast out, and sick healed	8	16	1	32	4	40	—	
Diseases healed, and devils cast out	4	23	1	39	—		—	
A leper cleansed	8	2	1	40	5	12	—	
Multitudes come to be healed	—		—		5	15	—	
The power of the Lord healing	—		—		5	17	—	
A paralytic healed	9	2	2	3	2	18	—	
An infirm man healed at Bethesda	—		—		—		5	2
Withered hand restored	12	9	3	1	6	6	—	
Numbers healed, who follow Jesus	12	15	3	10	—		—	
Unclean spirits confess him	—		3	11	—		—	
A multitude healed of diseases	—		—		6	17	—	
Virtue goes out of Jesus	—		—		6	19	—	
Centurion's servant healed	8	5	—		7	2	—	
Widow's son raised from the dead	—		—		7	11	—	
Many cured of infirmities, &c.	—		—		7	21	—	
Every sickness and disease healed	9	35	—		—		—	
Mary Magdalene healed	—		—		8	1	—	
A demoniac healed	12	22	—		11	14	—	
Tempest stilled at sea	8	23	4	36	8	22	—	
The legion cast out into swine	8	28	5	1	8	26	—	
Jairus' daughter raised	9	18	5	22	8	41	—	
Issue of blood healed	9	20	5	25	8	43	—	
Two blind men healed	9	27	—		—		—	
A dumb spirit cast out	9	32	—		—		—	
A few sick healed	—		6	5	—		—	
The sick healed	14	14	—		9	11	6	2
Five thousand fed	14	15	6	35	9	12	6	5
Jesus walks on the sea	14	22	6	45	—		6	16
Peter enabled to walk on water	14	28	—		—		—	
Wind ceases on Jesus' word	14	32	6	51	—		—	
Ship brought to land	15	21	—		—		6	21
The sick healed by touching	—		6	54	—		—	
Daughter healed	14	35	7	24	—		—	
A deaf and dumb man restored	—		7	32	—		—	
Great multitudes healed	15	30	—		—		—	
Four thousand fed	15	32	8	1	—		—	
A blind man restored	—		8	22	—		—	
Lunatic child healed	17	14	9	17	9	38	—	
Tribute money	17	24	—		—		—	
Jesus preserves his life	—		—		—		8	59
Blind beggar healed by washing	—		—		-		9	1
A woman cured of an infirmity	—		—		13	11	—	
A man cured of dropsy	—		—		14	2	—	
Ten lepers cleansed	—		—		17	12	—	
Lazarus raised from the dead	—		—		—		11	1
Great multitudes healed	19	2	—		—		—	
Blind Bartimeus restored	20	30	10	46	18	35	—	
The blind and lame healed	21	14	—		—		—	
Fig-tree withers away	21	18	11	12	—		—	
High-priest's servant healed	—		—		22	50	—	

4. REFERENCE TO PASSAGES IN THE BIBLE ON VARIOUS PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

Adoption, John i. 13. Gal. iii. 26; iv. 5, 6. 1 John iii. 1—3
Afflictions, Job. Rom. v. Heb. xii
Alms, Psalm xli. Matt. xxv. 31, &c. 2 Cor. ix
Angels, Heb. i. Rev. v. Luke xv. Luke i
Atonement, Isaiah liii. 2 Cor. v. Heb. ix
Baptism, Matt. xxviii. Rom. vi
Calling, 1 Thess. ii. 12. 2 Tim. i. 9
Charity (or love), 1 Cor. xiii
Chastity, 1 Thess. iv. 3. Gen. xxxix
Children, Deut. vi. Eph. vi. Col. iii
Christ—all the Bible full of him, Luke xxiv. 44
Church, Acts ii. 47. Rom. xii. 5
Coming again of Christ, Acts i. 11. Heb. ix. 28. Titus ii. 13. Luke xvii. 21
Commandments, Ten, Exod. xx. Deut. v
————, Two, Mark xii
Consolation, Isaiah lxi. 2 Cor. i. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17
Conversion, Luke xv. Ezekiel xviii. Matt. xviii
Covenant, Jer. xxxi. 32. Heb. viii
Creation, Gen. i. 2. John i. Heb. i. Psalm xix
Death, Gen. iii. 15. Rom. v. 12. 1 Cor. xv
Deluge, Gen. vi. to viii
Devil, Gen. iii. Matt. iv. Eph. i
Drunkenness, Prov. xxviii. 29—35. Isaiah v. 11. 1 Cor. vi. 10
Election, Deut. vii. Rom. ix. Eph. i
Enemies, Matt. v. Rom. xii
Faith, Heb. xi. Rom. iv
Fall of Man, Gen. iii. Ps. li
Fasting, Matt. vi. Joel ii
Fear of God, Ps. cxii. 3, 4
Forgiveness, Psalm xxxii. cxxx. Isaiah iv. Rom. iii
God, Exod. xxxiv. Isaiah xi. Psalm ciii. civ. cxlv. cxxxix
Gospel, Luke ii. Rom. i. 16, &c. Eph. ii
Grace, Titus ii. Eph. i. ii. Gal. v
Heart, Jer. xvii. 9. Matt. xv. Psalm li
Heaven, 1 Peter i. 4. Rev. xxi. xxii
Hell, Mark ix. Jude
Holy Ghost, John xiv. Gal. v
Hope, Rom. xv. Heb. vi. James iv
Humility, Phil. ii. Psalm cxxxi
Husband, Prov. v. Eph. v. Col. iii
Intercession of Christ, Rom. viii. Heb. vii
Judgment, Eccles. xii. John v. Matt. xxv. Rev. xx
Justification, Romans iii. iv. v. Gal. ii. iii. James ii
Kingdom of God, Daniel ii. vii. Gospels generally
Knowledge, Prov. iv. 8, 9
Law, Exod. xx. Romans vii. 8
Life eternal, John iii. 16; xvii. 3
Lord's Prayer, Matt. vi. 10
Lord's Supper, Luke xxii. 1 Cor. x. xi
Love of God, John iii. Romans v
Love to God, Deut. vi. Matt. xxii
Love of Christ, John xv. Eph. iii. Romans viii
Love to Christ, 1 Peter i
Love to men—Epistles of John
Lying, Eph. iv. Col. iii
Marriage, Gen. xxiv. Eph. v
Master, Gen. xviii. 19. Lev. xxv. 35
Ministers, 1 Cor. iv. 2 Cor. v
Original Sin, Rom. v. Eph. ii. 1 Cor. xv. 21
Paradise, Gen. ii. 2 Cor. xii
Parents, Deut. vi. Eph. vi
Patience, Job. James i. 3
Perseverance, Heb. iii. x
Poor, Psalm xlvi. lxxii. James ii
Praise, Psalm xcvi. ciii. cxlv. &c.
Prayer, 1 Tim. ii. Psalms. Dan. ix
Predestination, Romans viii. ix. Eph. i
Pride, Isaiah ii. Luke xviii
Prosperity, James v. Psalm xxx
Providence, Psalm lxv. cvi. Matt. vi
Reconciliation, Romans v. 2 Cor. v. Matt. v
Redemption, Eph. i. Col. i. Rev. v
Regeneration, John i. iii. Titus iii. 2 Cor. v
Repentance, Psalm li. Ezekiel xxxvi. Isaiah lv
Resignation, Job i. Matt. xxvi
Resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 1 Thess. iv. Rev. xx
Riches, James v. Luke xii. 16
Sabbath, Nehemiah x. Isaiah lviii. Mark ii
Sacrifice, Hebrews ix. x
Sanctification, 1 Thess. v. 23

Scriptures, Psalms xix. cxix
Self denial, Matt. xvi. Luke ix
Sickness, John xi. Isaiah xxxviii
Sin, Romans i. ii. iii. 1 John i
Singing, Psalm xcv. Ephes. v. Col. iii
Submission, Psalm xxxix. James iv. 1 Peter v
Temperance, Prov. xxiii. 1 Thess. v. Romans xiii
Temptation, Matt. iv. 1 Cor. x
Trinity, John xiv. xvi. Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 14
Watchfulness, Luke xxi. Matt. xxiv. xxv. 1 Thess. v
Wisdom, Proverbs viii. 9. James iii. Col. ii
Wives, Proverbs xxxi. Ephes. v. 1 Peter iii
World, 1 John ii. 5.

In this Table the verses are, generally, purposely omitted, that the Reader may search the whole chapter for the subject he wishes to find.

BIBLE WITH REFERENCES.

Let the Reader, by all means, if possible, get a Bible with marginal references. These shew you other parts of the Bible, which either explain, or are similar to the part you are reading, and they form of themselves a most useful commentary. It would be profitable for the children in a family to employ some time in the winter evening in finding out these references, and reading them to each other, or to their parents. Thus, on the first verse in the first chapter of Genesis, you will find a reference to the first, second, and third verses of the first chapter of John's Gospel, and to the first chapter and tenth verse of the Epistle to the Hebrews : these references shew you that God made all things by our Lord Jesus Christ. There are also other translations of the Hebrew sometimes put in the margin of the Bible, and this will help you in understanding what God has revealed for our use.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE GREAT GOD.

1. General Remarks—2. Where the knowledge of God may be gained—3. What God is not—4. What God is—5. The names of God—6. The display of God's perfections in Christ Jesus—7. The harmony of God's perfections in Christ—8. God our salvation—9. The way of access unto God—10. Communion with God—11. Passages of Scripture on the Attributes.

1. GENERAL REMARKS.

THE most important discovery of the Bible is to show to us God, our Maker. With this the sacred volume opens. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. —And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness.—So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he man, male and female created he them."

Our Creator must have a nearer interest in his creatures and we in him, than any of our fellow created beings can possibly have in us, or we can have in them. To know him, therefore, to gain his favour, and to be blessed by him, is the greatest glory, interest, and happiness for time and for eternity, of each human being. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

God only can describe himself. In considering every thing relating to the great God, our principal light must be derived from the discoveries which he has made of him-

self in his word. This chapter of the *Family Guide* will, therefore, necessarily, chiefly be gathered from the holy Scriptures.

The object now before us, then, is to give you some knowledge of the great God who made you; but as our Lord has told us "no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him," let us all look up to our divine Redeemer to teach us.

Prayer.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, who art in the bosom of the Father, that glorious Being, whom no man hath seen at any time, nor can see, we earnestly beseech thee to reveal to us thy divine Father; manifest his name to us and shew us his glory. Let the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shine in our hearts, in thy face, O Jesus! to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

2. WHERE THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD MAY BE GAINED.

The creation around us declares God in his works. Every thing within us, and about us, speaks of him. Though men are by nature alienated from him, and "none saith, Where is God, my Maker?" yet is the whole world full of Him.

The very frame of each man, every member of his body, every sense and faculty, every power of his mind and every feeling of his heart, plainly declares to man, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" by the great God. The innumerable creatures that people the air and the earth, the sea and the waters, declare that the Lord is: "that he is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works."

All the beauties of the natural world, the ten thousand productions of the earth, the light which we enjoy, the air which we breathe, the earth beneath, as well as the hea-

vens above, " declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. That which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." While " coarseness and clumsiness mar all the works of man," the least of God's works are full of wonder, and manifest infinite wisdom, power, and benevolence.

The PROVIDENCE of God tells also continually of his being and goodness. He gives all their MEAT in due season. " He sends forth his Spirit, and they are created ; he takes away their breath, they die and return to the earth. Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him ; he also will hear their cry, and save them." The same providence is seen in the punishing of the wicked. " The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth. The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." These things leave men " without excuse " who live as " without God in the world." But such is our blindness and corruption through sin, that this is our universal natural character.

God has therefore, in the riches of his love, given another discovery of himself in his INSPIRED WORD, or the Bible written by men under the teaching of the Holy Ghost. A peculiar nation was set apart to be the keepers of that word. " He shewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel." Their great privilege was, that " unto them were committed the oracles of God." The language of creation and providence, though continually manifested and intelligible to all, is still only a silent shewing forth of knowledge. There is no speech, there are no words ; their voice is not heard. But " the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Here we have

a clearer, fuller, and more glorious sight of God in the display of his loving-kindness and truth, and all his glory; he has "magnified his word."

In his INCARNATE WORD, that is, in the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Word of God, made flesh," and dwelling among us, we have the brightest of all displays of God to man. "His glory is the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" a Son is the representative of his Father. Jesus Christ is "the brightness of his" Father's "glory, the express image of his person." In answer to the request, "Lord, shew us the Father," he replies, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He is "the image of the invisible God." And by him light shines upon us out of the darkness with which the being and glory of God are otherwise shrouded. For "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

The HOLY GHOST again, is the great Teacher who makes all these clear to us. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him;" but the Holy Ghost, who is one with the Father and the Son, reveals these things to us. "The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God; now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." It is his inward teaching that guides us into all truth. He gives "the riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Our Lord says of the Holy Ghost, "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Ask for this Spirit, and you shall receive it.

O let us seek to walk in this glorious light and liberty of the children of God; "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same

image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Meditation.

My God and my Father! in how many ways hast thou revealed thyself unto me! but O how dark has been my mind, that though in thee I live and move and have my being, and thou walkest upon the wings of the wind, and hast thy path in the sea, and the heavens declare thy glory, and all thy creatures speak of thee, I have yet disregarded this all-surrounding and universal testimony to thy presence, and have too much lived as if there were no God in the world.

But what thanks do I owe thee for giving to me thy blessed word, and for that wonderful love which led thee to give thine only-begotten Son, and to promise thy Holy Spirit, that I might attain that knowledge of thyself which is infinitely necessary to me! O that I may gratefully receive and believingly use these inestimable advantages, and so become wise unto salvation! O that I may see thee in every thing, and daily be increasing in the knowledge of thee, my God!

3. WHAT GOD IS NOT.

GOD IS WHOLLY UNCREATED by any other. His description is, "I am the Lord that maketh all things." Isaiah xliv. 24. He is not made nor created, but the original Creator of all. God is INVISIBLE. He is a Spiritual Being, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see:—to whom be honour and power everlasting, world without end." God never CHANGES. Man is feeble and uncertain, but God "is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Num. xxiii. 19. O blessed truth; the happiness of all creation depends

upon it. " Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James i. 17. God is also UNSEARCHABLE. The highest archangel must have an imperfect knowledge of the great God. " Canst thou by searching find out God ? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection ?" Job xi. 7. " Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out." Job xxxviii. 9. He dwells " in the thick darkness," too deep to be penetrated, as well as " in the light," too bright to be endured.

God is NOT BOUNDED, or to be comprehended; he is infinite and incomprehensible. " Great is the Lord, his greatness is unsearchable." Psalm cxlv. 3. As it is impossible for any creature to escape his presence, so the world cannot contain him, nor the understanding of the creature fully conceive him. " Behold the heavens and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." 1 Kings viii. 27. " He filleth all in all." Eph. i. 23. It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do ? deeper than hell, what canst thou know ? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job xi. 9. He has no EQUAL. " Who in the heavens can be compared unto the Lord ? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto our God ?" Psalm lxxxix. 6. " To whom will ye liken God ? or what likeness will ye compare unto him ? " Isa. xl. 18.

HE NEVER CAN BE RESISTED. " He doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ? " Dan. iv. 35. " Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas and all deep places." Psalm cxxxv. 6.

Meditation.

How glorious a God is our God ! if we take away every defect that belongs to the creature, and add every conceivable perfection, we still fall infinitely short of comprehend-

ing God. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever." May self-abasement, reverence, admiration, delight, and holy love, ever fill my soul in contemplating the great God! Amen.

4. WHAT GOD IS.

The Bible, and that alone, tells us; and let us notice some plain declarations. "The Lord our God is ONE LORD." "God is a SPIRIT," and we are to "worship him in spirit and in truth." "God is LIGHT, and in him is no darkness at all," and we are to "walk in the light as he is in the light." "God is LOVE, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." "The Lord is GOOD, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him." Nahum i. 7. "God is TRUE, a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he." Deut. xxxii. 4. "The truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord." Psalm cxvii. He is altogether HOLY. "The Lord our God is holy." Psalm xcix. 9. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." 1 Pet. i. 16. The Lord is RIGHTEOUS in ALL his ways. Psalm cxlv. 17. "The Lord thy God is a MERCIFUL God." Deut. iv. 31. He is the BLESSED, or happy one. Mark xiv. 61.

There are perfections peculiar and incommunicable to the creature. God is ETERNAL. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Ps. xc. 2. "Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting." Isa. lxiii. 16. "I am Alpha and Omega (which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come." Rev. i. 8. "The high and

lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." God is EVERYWHERE PRESENT ; " Do not I fill heaven and earth ? saith the Lord." Jer. xxiii. 24. God has ALL POWER : " With God nothing shall be impossible." Luke i. 37. " Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh ; is there any thing too hard for me ? " Jer. xxxii. 27. He is the GREATEST of all ; " Thou, Lord, art most high for evermore." Ps. xcii. 8. He KNOWS ALL THINGS ; " Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering." Job xxvi. 6. " The darkness and the light to him are both alike." Ps. cxxxix. 12. " His understanding is infinite." Ps. cxlvii. 5. He FORESEES ALL THINGS ; " I am God, and there is none else. I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa. xlvi. 9, 10. He DISCERNS EVERY THOUGHT, WORD, and WORK ; " The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man." Psalm xciv. 11. " I the Lord search the heart and try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jer. xvii. 10. If you cannot bear all this glory, look at God in Jesus, and his reflected beams shall fill you with delight.

Prayer of St. Paul.

" O Thou, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that the eyes of my understanding being enlightened, I may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints—and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." Amen and Amen.

5. THE NAMES OF GOD.

Various names are given in the Scriptures to the great God. Some of the Hebrew words describing his name are thought to mean as follows :—*Jehovah*, the eternal, self-

existing God; he which is, and which was, and which is to come. *Shaddai*, the supplier of all sufficiency. *Elohim*, the author of eternal life, as set forth in the everlasting covenant. *Sabaoth*, the mighty champion, the Redeemer of his people, and the conqueror of all his foes. *Adonai*, one having lordship or dominion over all creatures. A full revelation of the name of God was given, when, in answer to the request of Moses, "Shew me thy glory," God said, "I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee." And we read afterwards, "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Other names were given to Moses. When he asked what the name of God was, "God said unto Moses, I AM that I AM; and he said unto me, Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." This sets before us an eternal, incomprehensible, unchangeable Being; the self-existent God. "I am Jehovah, I change not." Mal. iii. 6. To this is added the following title: "God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." All these names belong to our Lord Jesus Christ, who gives to us the realizing view of God, and is the memorial of the Lord, the manifestation of the invisible God.

God has graciously engaged to be the God of Abraham and all his seed; and, for ever adored be his grace to us sinners of the Gentiles, this includes all true Christians, who, though not sprung from Abraham after the flesh, are counted through Christ, as the seed of Abraham.

Lastly, in the form of Christian baptism we have a yet

more distinct revelation of the name of God, "Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here is the one God, in three persons, distinctly set before us as the object of worship and service, and engaged to bless us. O glorious truth! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one name, one God, our God for ever and ever!

Meditation.

Shew me also thy glory, O God, my Father! in every name by which thou hast revealed thyself, and give me to know that thou art my God, and early to seek thee, and to thirst after thee, and never to be content while at a distance from thee. Surely thou art the chief and only good of thy creatures; O give me then the unspeakable bliss of having the One Good One (Luke xviii. 19) for my portion and happiness for ever!

6. THE DISPLAY OF GOD'S PERFECTIONS IN CHRIST JESUS.

We have seen that our Lord Jesus Christ is "the brightness of his Father's glory;" let us endeavour then to discover something of that glory "in the face of Jesus Christ."

All the perfections of God are indeed thus displayed; but we will select some.

Christ is THE WISDOM OF GOD. Wisdom is the knowledge and right comprehension of things, distinguishing truth from error, rejecting evil and choosing good. God alone is infinite, perfect, and infallible wisdom. But Christ is the "only wise God our Saviour." Jude 25. Our Lord Christ displayed this wisdom in creation (John i. 3. Prov. iii. 19), and in providence (Col. i. 16); but it is in the union of the two natures, God and man, and in the whole work of his mediation for sinners, that we have the richest display of divine wisdom; "Great is the mystery of godliness—God was manifest in the flesh. O the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" which this has already dis-

covered, and will discover through eternity! for they are all hid in him, in whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Hence "the principalities and powers in heavenly places know by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Ephes. iii. 10. That such a plan should have been devised when our salvation seemed hopeless; that it should have been manifested towards such rebellious creatures; that it should so provide for, illustrate, and secure all God's glories; that through eternity we shall contemplate it with ceaseless and growing interest, and never-ending joy and gratitude: O the depths of the wisdom of God, in our salvation by Christ Jesus! This is a boundless subject.

Christ is also THE POWER OF GOD, and hence he is often called the "arm of the Lord," and "his right hand," Psalm cxviii. 15, 16. Isaiah xl. 53. This again was manifested in creation and providence, Col. i. 16, 17. Hebrews i. But it is especially in his greatest weakness, his death on the cross, that Christ is seen to be the power of God. His sufferings are ever, therefore, connected with his glory. (Read Isaiah liii. Psalm xxii. Rev. v.) He effected that which all created beings could never have effected, "the reconciliation" of the fallen *world* to the holy *God;* he, in his utmost weakness on the cross, "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." This power is displayed in the salvation of each believer, but it will have its fullest manifestation when "the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." Then shall it be said, "Thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." Tremendous will be the power exerted in the destruction of his enemies (Isaiah lxiii. Rev. vi. and xix.); "and O the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints!" This display of his power is rapidly hastening on, and is even now at hand. "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

Christ discovers to us THE LOVE OF GOD. Never, never can fallen man discover in any other way so distinctly, so powerfully, the love of God. When this love is revealed by the Holy Ghost to the heart, it shuts out fear and doubts. The scriptures always speak of it with admiration. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son. God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us ; hereby perceive we the love of God. In this was manifested the love of God towards us. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." O the amazing love displayed in the whole progress of a sinner's salvation, from its first beginning to its consummation ! Reader, desire for thyself above all things to know, and partake of, and enjoy this love, now and through all eternity.

Christ discovers to us THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. His very name is, "the Lord our Righteousness ; the Sun of Righteousness." He not only exhibited the only perfect pattern of righteousness that this world ever beheld ; but he displays the divine righteousness, the glory that unites all the divine perfections, by his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, and intercession. How awfully strict must be the divine justice, when "it pleased the Lord," before one sinner could be pardoned, "to bruise his Son ! he hath put him to grief, to make his soul an offering for sin."

Meditation.

Well might St. Paul say, "Christ is all in all." Well might he count "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord." As no other light is wanted when the sun shines in its strength, so when Christ, my sun of righteousness, shines on me, I have the fullest light to discern the glorious God that this world can afford. O Jesus, shine more and more into my soul !

7. THE HARMONY OF GOD'S PERFECTIONS IN CHRIST.

In the display of God's perfections (as set before us, for instance, in Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) there seems an irreconcilable contradiction. If God "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," how can he "keep mercy for thousands" of generations? "If he will by no means clear the guilty," how can he be a God "forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sins?" These questions can only be answered by contemplating Jesus and his glorious gospel. "Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." The mercy of his promises, and the truth of his threatenings, are all realized in Jesus. He, by his obedience, has for us sinners obtained all the promises, and by his sufferings for us, endured the penalties of the divine wrath, which God had justly threatened, and we had truly incurred. The righteousness of God is exhibited in the most distinct and powerful light by the obedience unto death of the Son of God, and thereby a title is gained for our pardon, peace, and everlasting salvation. Now we are "justified freely through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The rainbow, showing you the light in varied but united, in reflected but yet distinct rays of glory, surrounds the throne of God.

In this harmony of divine perfections "grace" triumphantly "reigns," Rom. v. 21. O amazing, astounding grace! God's co-equal Son becomes man, and dies, the just for the unjust! The infinite dignity and excellence of the divine nature is united with the human in our Immanuel. The word which "was with God, and was God, was

made flesh and dwelt among us," and suffered and died for our sins, and thus infinite honour is put upon the law of God, and infinite satisfaction made to the divine justice, and all "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Every attribute of God is harmonized, displayed, and glorified in the salvation of him that believes in Jesus. But, O fearful and awful thought! the same attributes are harmonized, displayed, and glorified in the destruction of all who reject this salvation, and rebel against God. That which is mercy to his people, is destruction to his enemies; "he overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, for his mercy endureth for ever; he smote great kings, for his mercy endureth for ever." Fly, fly, from his coming wrath, to Jesus, the only ark of refuge for sinful man.

Meditation.

"A just God and a Saviour!" that is, the God that meets all my fears and all my wants. I know that "the Judge of all the earth must do right;" but I know that if he does so, without a Saviour I am lost and undone for ever. But, O joyful thought! this just God is become my Saviour, and when "I confess" my sins, "he is just and faithful (as well as merciful and gracious) to forgive my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness." Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.

8. GOD OUR SALVATION.

How wonderful is it, but not less true than wonderful, that a poor sinner may say to the great God, "Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid!" Isaiah xii. 2.

And how great is that salvation which he has provided for his own people, in all its parts! From eternity he thought of it, purposed and planned it: Jesus was appointed to be their Head, Mediator, and complete Saviour, without any reference to the merits and obedience of man

as to the cause of it. "God hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given in Christ Jesus before the world began." And that this salvation might be sure to all the heirs of promise, they are "given" by the Father to Christ "out of the world," to be kept and saved by him, (see John, chapters vi. x. and xvii.) and a covenant oath is made for their security. Heb. vi.

This salvation is ENTIRELY of God, wholly FREE. "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." But does not this tend to licentiousness; or is it not our after-obedience by our own power that maintains it? No, neither; "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

This salvation is indeed only begun now; we are waiting for its completion. It will not be realized fully, and completed, till the day of the resurrection. But we are now "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time," and we are directed to "gird up the loins of our mind, to be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." O the glories of that completed salvation! "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is: we shall ever be with the Lord." Till that full day of glory arrives, may our hearts be refreshed by much meditation upon it! Some of the last thoughts of Henry Martyn when sinking under a distressing disease, were thus expressed in his journal:—'I sat in the orchard, and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God; in solitude—my com-

panion, my friend, and comforter. O when shall time give place to eternity ! When shall appear that new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness ! There—there shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth : none of that wickedness that has made men worse than wild beasts—none of those corruptions that add still more to the miseries of mortality, shall be seen or heard any more.'

Meditation.

Surprising indeed it is ! full of joy and full of comfort is the thought, that God, who is the just terror of the sinner, may now be viewed by the sinner, believing in Jesus, as his salvation ! " O visit me with thy salvation, satisfy me with thy mercy early, that I may see the good of thy chosen ! " Salvation just suits all my miseries, all my sinfulness, and all my necessities ; God, my salvation, is full rest, complete satisfaction, and boundless joy for my troubled, anxious, disquieted heart. Let me, then, realize and enjoy it day by day.

9. THE WAY OF ACCESS UNTO GOD.

How may a sinful creature come near to God ? It is one of the most important of questions, and the answer in the Bible is very clear. Look at One who wears our form ; he is in the bosom of the eternal Father, his elect in whom his soul delighteth. He is our Mediator : " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." He is " the Head of the church," and we are " members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." United by faith to him, we have freedom of access to the Holy God : yes, " boldness (O astonishing word !) to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." This is the " new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."

Come, then, by Jesus, by him only. Come in any other

way, and you are rejected with righteous wrath. Come in this way, and you are welcomed with fatherly love. It is his own word. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." The fierce displeasure of God, and his fiery indignation, is revealed against every soul of man that doeth evil. But now, for a season, there is a mercy-seat, there is a High-Priest for us, there is "a throne of grace" to which we may "come boldly," now in an accepted time and in a day of salvation, "to obtain mercy and to find grace to help in time of need."

And if you come to Christ, you have in that very coming sweet tokens for good. "Every man that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me:" it shews divine teaching. "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me;" it shews that you are among those given to Christ. "And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out:" it shews that you will certainly be received, and be preserved to the end. John x. 27, 28.

But do you say, I have no power of myself to come to God by Christ, and even use the words of Christ against yourself—"No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him?" It is true, most true. Experience confirms the divine statement. But, do you make the objection as a cloak for sin, and an excuse for indolence! It is your guilt and condemnation to be unwilling to come to Christ. Do you make the objection in distress and anxiety of mind?" "Help is laid on one that is mighty." Jesus is "mighty to save." He has for sinners abundant grace. "Likewise also the Holy Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Your Father which is in heaven will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask. Cry mightily, earnestly, constantly; wait on the Lord, and see if he will not have mercy on you. See if he will break his word. Heaven and earth shall sooner pass away. O give not place to the devil by any cavils of this kind; the root of which almost invariably is the ruling love of the world, unbelief of the reality of spiritual and eternal good, and slothful indifference to your everlasting welfare.

See now clearly the way of access. "Through Christ we have access by one Spirit to the Father." The gate is open ; the way is clear ; sinner, escape for thy life. Now be delivered from hell and everlasting damnation. Now, now come to Jesus, and gain everlasting glory.

Meditation.

When the apostle asked, "How can we know the way ?" how full and blessed was the answer of our Lord to his inquiry ! "I am the way, the truth, and the life !" O may I every day walk in Christ as the way, know Christ as the truth, and live in him as the life of my soul ! "To me to live is Christ ;" let this be my life and my joy continually, and then if I die, to die will be gain ; or if he shall appear before I die, abiding in him, I shall "have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming." And how wonderful is it that the way of access is not for the righteous, but for sinners ! Yes, only for sinners, so that it is not the righteous, but the sinner that comes to the Father through Jesus, and by one Spirit. May I constantly avail myself of this amazing privilege, obtained for me, a sinner, by my divine and righteous Lord !

10. COMMUNION WITH GOD.

This is the end of the knowledge of God—the daily and constant enjoyment of his presence ; and this only is the creature's happiness. "In thy presence is fulness of joy." This the Christian in a measure attains here. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ : and these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." This will be the Christian's joy through eternity. There "the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

How then may we daily walk with God, as Enoch did, as Abraham did, and as David did ?

There is COMMUNION WITH THE FATHER. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father." This is eminently in

love ; God is love, and his love was manifested in sending his only-begotten Son into the world ; and the " love of God " is that which the apostle specially desires might be with the Corinthians. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. " The Father himself loveth you." John xvi, 27. And when " the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," (Rom. v. 5,) when we see how eternal, free, unchangeable, and distinguishing it is, it excites corresponding returns of love, and we " love him because he first loved us." 1 John iv. 19. And in the flowing in of God's love to our souls, through the word of Christ and by his Spirit, and the going out of our affections to him, consists much of that sweet communion, commerce, and intercourse which subsists between a soul born of God and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. How blessed, how infinitely blessed, this fellowship is, what tongue can tell !

There is COMMUNION WITH THE SON. " Truly our fellowship is with his Son Jesus Christ ;"—a communion so entire and intimate, as to be compared to that of the members and the body, the husband and the wife. This communion is peculiarly " in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. xiii. 14. He is full of grace and truth, and of his fulness have all we received ;—full of grace in his person as God and man, in his life and death for us, in his work, in his kingdom, and glory ; full of grace in the gifts of his Spirit, received for us sinners who believe in him. And when this is discovered to us by the Holy Ghost (John xvi. 14, 15), then our hearts are drawn out to him. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, his love constrains us, and we live not to ourselves, but to him who died for us. He sympathizes with us ; in all our afflictions he is afflicted ; he bestows his gifts daily upon us, and we desire in all things to look up to him, trust in him, love him, and obey him ; and where we do not, grieve and mourn for our guilt and folly. O blessed communion ! No communion with any on earth is so perfect and so sweet as this communion between Christ and his people.

There is COMMUNION WITH THE HOLY GHOST. This is

what the apostle closes with in his desire for the Corinthians, "The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all!" He is the present administrator of the kingdom of Christ, the Comforter who supplies our wants in the absence of the Saviour. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Many and gracious are the offices which he undertakes for us. He is our Quickener, Guide, Teacher, Sanctifier, Comforter, and Upholder. The temple in which he delights to dwell is the body of the believer, 1 Cor. vi. 19; where he comes also, he "abides for ever." John xiv. 16. O the unspeakable advantage of this Almighty Spirit, who, with multiplied and diversified gifts, distributes as he will to the people of Christ for the good of the whole body! He glorifies Christ, witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God, seals us to the day of redemption, gives the earnest of our heavenly inheritance; he becomes in us a spirit of supplication and of adoption, of fruitfulness and of holy joy. May we never, then, resist or grieve him, and never quench his motions in us? May we worship and love him, and desire his in-dwelling, and walk in the Spirit day by day! This is our communion with the Divine Spirit.

Communion with God is maintained BY LOVING him and delighting in him all the day. "Delight thyself in the Lord." O gracious direction! may we know it in Jesus, and by the Holy Ghost, constantly and experimentally! It is also maintained BY PRAYER to him: our life, a life given to prayer; constant rising of the heart's affections to our ever-present God, in holy thirstings, desires, and requests to him. It is, lastly, maintained BY PRAISE, a duty never out of season to the Christian; "in every thing give thanks." David's Psalms are full of this thankfulness, and no small part of our communion with God consists in the grateful emotions of a full heart, overflowing with praise and thanksgiving.

Prayer for communion with God.

O my God! draw me, and I will run after thee. It is thine own covenant engagement to all that believe in thy Son; "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." It is thine own promise to him of a "contrite and a humble spirit," that thou wilt dwell with him, to "revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Do thou, I beseech thee, dwell with me and be in me. O give me the humble and contrite spirit, that I may, through Jesus, have the blessed in-dwelling of God himself, and my body may be the very temple of the Holy Ghost, and my whole life a walking with thee in faith and hope, in joy and love, till I come to see thee as thou art, and to know as I am known.

II. PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE GREAT GOD.

Greatness, Power, and Omniscience—Genesis xviii. 14. Exod. xv. 6, 13. Numbers xi. 23. 1 Sam. ii. 2. 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12. Job ix. 32. Psalm xliv. 21; lxxvii. 19; civ. 24; cvii. 29; lxxxix. 1, 2, 7, 8. Proverbs v. 21. Jer. v. 22. Daniel ii. 20—22; iv. 3. Joel ii. 11. Matt. xix. 26. Luke i. 37, 38

Justice and Righteousness—Gen. xviii. 25. Exod. xxxiv. 7. Numb. xxiii. 19. 1 Sam. xv. 29. Deut. xxxii. 4. Psalm xi. 7; xix. 8; xxiii. 4; xxxvi. 6; xlv. 7; xlviii. 10; lxxi. 19; lxxxix. 14, 34; xcii. 15; xcvii. 2. Isaiah xi. 4. Hosea xiv. 9. Romans xi. 11. Rev. xv. 3.

Goodness, Mercy, and Condescension—Exodus xv. 13; xxxiv. 6, 7. Deut. i. 31. Judges x. 16. 2 Kings xiii. 23. 2 Chron. vi. 18. Nehemiah ix. 17, 31. Job xi. 6. Psalm xxxiii. 5; xxxv. 10; xxxvi. 5; lvii. 10; xxxvi. 7; lxii. 12; lxxviii. 38; lxxxvi. 15; lxxxix. 14; xcviii. 3; ciii. 3, 4, 9—13; cvi. 4, 5; cxiii. 5, 6; cxvi. 5; cxxx. 7; cxlv. 8, 9. Isaiah xxx. 18. Jer. xii. 15; iii. 12. Lam. iii. 21. Hosea xi. 4. Micah vii. 18. Matt. xviii. 14. Luke i. 50. Eph. ii. 14. 1 Peter i. 3. Romans xv. 9. 2 Cor. i. 3. James i. 17; ii. 13; v. 11

His great love to Man—John xvi. 17. Romans viii. 32. Eph. ii. 4, 7. 1 John iii. 16; iv. 7—11, 19

He is our Portion and Refuge—2 Sam. xxii. 19, 31. Job xvi. 20. Psalm ix. 9; xvi. 5; xxvii. 7, 8; xxxi. 3; xxxvii. 39; xlvi. 1; liv. 4; lix. 9, 16, 17; lxi 3; lxii. 7; lxxiii. 26; lxxxiv. 11; xc. 1; cxix. 57; cxxi. 2; cxlii. 5. Proverbs xviii. 10. Isaiah xxv. 4. Lam. iii. 24. Hosea xiii. 9. Joel iii. 16. Nahum i. 7

Salvation is from God—Job xiii. 16. Psalm iii. 8; cxviii. 14; cxliv. 10. Isaiah xliii. 11. Jeremiah iii. 23. Hosea xiii. 4. Eph. ii. 8

Invitations to come to God—Isaiah lv. 1—3. James iv. 8

God expostulates with us—Deut. v. 29. Isaiah i. 5—18: v. 4; l. 2; lv. 2. Lam. iii. 39. Ezekiel xviii. 23, 29, 32; xxxiii. 14. John v. 40,

CHAPTER III.

ON CREATION.

1. God the Creator of all—2. The vastness of the visible creation—3. The creation of man—4. All things made to glorify God—5. The fall and recovery of man—6. Creation bears constant witness to redemption—7. The New Creation—8. The voice of creation praising God—9. Prayers.

1. GOD THE CREATOR OF ALL.

We find ourselves placed in the midst of a world full of the wonderful works of God; every thing we see, and hear, and have intercourse with, tells us of the great God, as the one Maker and Creator: who bade all to be, and called it into existence where it existed not before.

At the beginning of the Bible we have a full account of the way in which it pleased God to proceed in creation. All was done in order and in succession. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. In six days he formed the present state of our world. On the first day he commanded the light to be, and there was light, and he divided it from the darkness. On the second day he made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. On the third day he separated the land from the seas, and made the earth to bring forth grass and herb and fruit trees. On the fourth he made the sun to rule the day, and also the moon, which, with the stars, was to rule the night. On the fifth day, the fishes in the water and the fowls in the air; and on the sixth the cattle, beasts, and creeping things were created.

After having thus made a beautiful residence adapted for the use of man, he last of all, at the close of the sixth day, made man, holy and happy, placed him in it, and gave him dominion over all.

Thus man was surrounded on every side with the works of the great God, and you may see in all of them plain proofs of his wisdom, love, and power. His works are the looking-glass in which you may contemplate continually the perfections of your Creator, and by which you may rise to a constant communion with him.

Now, in order to this, the first requisite is Faith, or belief that God is the Creator of all. Hence St. Paul says, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." This faith is founded on God's word: for though "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, yet men, not liking to retain God in their knowledge, shut their eyes to the mirror of creation presenting God always before them, and require a yet plainer teacher.

The word of God, therefore, most distinctly sets before us God the Creator of all things, and calls us to faith in him. We learn also from that word that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were all concerned and combined in the work of creation. Thus of our Lord Jesus Christ it is said, "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made;" and of the Holy Ghost it is said, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. i. 2. "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created." Ps. civ. 30.

Look then upon the magnificent works of creation. Observe first the beautiful LIGHT which removes the veil from the face of created things, and makes every thing visible; giving us the means of the sight and enjoyment of the glories of the heavens and the glories of the earth. See the expanded FIRMAMENT above; the heavens which

declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament which sheweth his handywork, and soar through its immensity; rise from the first heavens in the clouds, to the second heavens in the starry regions, and the third heavens beyond all, where is the more directly manifested presence of God. Contemplate next the boundless and unfathomable OCEAN: he measures the whole "in the hollow of his hands;" he raises the tumultuous waves when they swell and roar; at his bidding all is again stillness and peace; and he makes even the sand its barrier. Or again, view the variegated EARTH, its hills and its vallies, its woods and its fields; its springs and its rivers; its infinitely diversified productions of herbs and flowers; its hidden riches in its mines, and its outward fruitfulness. View the dazzling glory of the SUN by day, enlightening, warming, enlivening, and fructifying every thing, rejoicing as a giant to run his course, and that full of blessing. View the milder, peaceful beams of the MOON, which cheer the solitary traveller by night, but disturb not the quiet and repose of the millions of the weary. Rise then above these to the glittering STARS, those worlds upon worlds, those crevices in the heavens, by which we get a glimpse of the grandeur of God. Then go from inanimate nature to THE LIVING WORLD; to the fishes that people the ocean, from the gigantic whale that takes his pastime in the sea, to the almost invisible inhabitants that people a drop of water; from the vast elephant to the least insect that creeps on the earth; all, all is full of God. His power, his wisdom, his love, shine forth in the greatest and the smallest; nothing is made or subsists without him; nothing is above his control; nothing is beneath his care.

And into this world he introduced man as head and Lord; bidding him "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." He made for him the garden of Eden, with every thing adapted for his happiness; gave him a companion, and bid him "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

I would close this part in the words of a late writer, the Rev. Mr. Kirby, who has deeply studied the living works of God. He says, speaking of the minute animals of creation ; the innumerable INSECTS which fill our world :—

"Nothing is more striking than the infinitely diversified forms into which creative power has moulded the little frail animals that are destined to inhabit, and numbers of them to illuminate the wide expanse of WATERS occupying so large a portion of the globe which we inhabit. When we survey with curious and delighted eyes the varied tribes that cover the SOILS of every aspect and elevation of that part of the globe that rises out from the fluctuating surface of the great deep, and which, instead of deriving their nourishment and means of life and breath from the waters, salt or fresh, live, and breathe, and are fed by principles and elements communicated either mediately or immediately from the AIR, an *atmospheric* ocean—an expanse that envelopes [or clothes] uninterruptedly the whole of our globe, and which itself is fed and renewed by the constant effluxes [flowings] of *the great centre* of irradiation [of that which gives light] ; which also in its turn, as well as all the other orbs that burn and are radiant, and those that revolve around them and reflect their light, receive their all from HIM, that GREAT AND INEFFABLE BEING who gives to all and receives from none, I lose myself in infinite amazement ; I shrink into very nothingness ; I am lost in the depths of the unfathomable deity. Life, a life attended in most cases, if not all, with some enjoyment, swarms every where, in the air, in the earth, under the earth, in the waters—there is no place in which the will of an Almighty Creator is not executed by some being that has animal life. What power is manifested in the organization and structure of those infinite hosts of existence ! what wisdom in their adaptation to their several functions! and what goodness and stupendous love in that universal action upon all these different and often discordant creatures, compelling them, while they are gratifying their own appetites and passions, and following the lead of their

several instincts, to promote the good of the whole system, combining into harmony almost universal discord, and out of death and destruction bringing forth life and health, and universal joy ! He who, as Hermas, an ancient writer, speaks, 'contains all things,' can alone thus act upon all things, and direct them, in all their ways, to acknowledge him, by the accomplishment of each wise and beneficent purpose of his will. Philo Judæus, in his book upon agriculture, speaking of those words of the Psalmist, "The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing," has the following sublime idea illustrative of this subject :— "God, like a shepherd and king, leads, according to right and law, the earth, and the water, and the air, and the fire, and whatever plants or animals are therein ; things mortal and things divine ; the physical structure also of the heavens, and of the sun and moon ; the revolutions and harmonious choirs of the other stars, placing over them his right word, the first-born Son, who has inherited the care of this holy flock as the Viceroy of our mighty King."

Meditation.

Can you, Christian reader, contemplate these things, can you "stand still and consider the wondrous works of God" (Job xxxvii. 14,) without joining in the expressions of David? "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him ? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." Psalm viii. 3—5. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of thy riches, so is the great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts !" Psalm cxix. 24, 25. O may I learn to fear, and love, and trust in, and serve thee, my Creator and my God, now and evermore !

2. THE VASTNESS OF THE VISIBLE CREATION.

Man, confined to a cottage in a little village, is ready to

think his own hamlet, or his neighbouring market-towns, comprehend the chief part of the world. Men who have never been out of their own country, and have read little of others, have but a feeble idea of the vastness of the habitable globe, with its thickly inhabited cities, its trackless regions, its almost boundless ocean, and its eight hundred millions of inhabitants. Men, before the discovery of astronomy, had little idea of the worlds upon worlds in the midst of which our earth moves, and of which it forms a part. The Bible leads us, however, to other worlds and other inhabitants of those worlds, and shows the interest which they take both in our creation and in the wonders of redemption, which things the angels desire to look into.

But lift up your eyes and survey the vast hemisphere above. See by day the sun in its splendour and glory. It is calculated to be nearly one hundred millions of miles distant from us, and nearly nine hundred thousand miles in diameter, being above one million times as large as our earth. Besides our earth, ten planets, some appearing like splendid stars, and several of them vastly larger than the earth, revolve around the sun. One of the more distant of those planets, Saturn, five hundred times larger than our earth, is calculated to be above nine hundred millions of miles distant from the sun.* O how vast the Maker

* LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL PLANETS.

Names of Planets.	Diameter of each.	Circumference of each.	Distance from the Sun.	Orbit, or Circle	Revolution on its Axis. Hrs. Min.	Revolution about the Sun Days. Hrs. Min.	Velocity in a Minute
SUN	796,000	2,501,964					
MERCURY	2,460	7,724	32,000,000	201,024,009	Uncertain	87 21 16	1515
VENUS	7,906	24,825	59,000,000	370,636,000	23 21	224 16 49	1124
EARTH	7,964	25,020	95,000,000	508,939,000	24	365 5 48	968
MARS	4,440	13,960	130,000,000	773,686,000	24 40	686 23 27	782
JUPITER	81,155	254,908	424,000,000	2,662,280,000	9 55	4,332 2 20	362
SATURN	67,870	213,112	777 000,000	48,81,891,000	10 16	10,759 6 36	326
HERSCHELL	35,112	114,912	1,800,000,000	Uncertain	Uncertain	30,295 days.	Uncert.

The admeasurement is by English miles: there are considerable variations in the different admeasurements. The other planets are Pallas, Juno, Ceres, Vates.

of all, who bid them to be and to move in their varied orbits!

But take a larger survey; go beyond the sphere of our sun, and the planets revolving around it; look up, on a clear night, to the immense concave above your heads. See its glittering glories. And then consider the light which God has given respecting them, by modern discoveries made through the telescope. It has been calculated that light comes to the earth from the sun in eight minutes, but so distant is one of the nearest of the fixed stars that light takes a year and a half to pass from that star to the earth. The distance of the stars from us is such that, in the best observations made with the most powerful telescopes, they still retain the appearance which they have to the naked eye, of mere points of light. Their size must be immense. Their number is incalculable. The milky way, examined by powerful telescopes, resolves itself into an incredible number of small stars. O how great, how glorious the Creator and Upholder of these innumerable worlds! Nor is his greatness and glory diminished, but magnified, by the same traces of wisdom, power and love, discovered to us by the microscope in the smallest and meanest of insects.

The earth is not a flat piece of ground, but a globe, like an orange, about twenty-four thousand miles round. The sun does not go round the earth, as it appears to do, and as, in common language, all speak of it as doing; but the earth goes round the sun, in three hundred and sixty-five days, and turns round its own axis in twenty-four hours, causing thus the varied seasons of the year, and the interchange of night and day. How wonderful is the power of God, thus suspending these mighty globes in the air, and revolving each in the immensity of space, and keeping each in its orbit, without ever deviating from their appointed course. "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also established them for ever and ever."

If a cannon-ball were to proceed from the earth as

quickly as it goes from the mouth of a cannon, and to continue going with the same rapidity till it reached the nearest of the fixed stars, it has been calculated that it would take about 600 years to reach that star.

How wonderful also are the COMETS. The word *comet*, taken from a Greek word, is so called from the appearance of the comet in the skies, generally with a long hairy brush, or tail of light, connected with it. A comet is a heavenly body, in the planetary region, appearing suddenly, and then disappearing. Some return in a short period, others require a longer period; Halley's comet returns in about seventy-six years. Some of them pass so quickly through the air as to move many millions of miles in a day. But little, however, is yet known respecting them. This is calculated to teach us, respecting creation as well as redemption, that humbling but profitable lesson: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Meditation.

O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens! And yet thou condescendedst to be my God and my portion for ever. And all thy wisdom, greatness, power, and love are, in Jesus, my security for everlasting blessedness. Who is so great a God as our God?

3. THE CREATION OF MAN.

We must now more distinctly consider the creation of man, as God dwells more particularly upon it, and it more immediately concerns us. This is the account given of our creation:—"God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his

own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them."

The ever-glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are represented here as determining to make man. He was to be made in the divine image. Our Lord Christ is frequently called in the New Testament, "the image of God"; (2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 3.) it appears therefore hence, that his incarnation having been determined on before the foundation of the world, (Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Peter i. 20,) Adam was made in that fore-ordained image. He was also made in the likeness of God, which we learn is righteousness and true holiness, (Eph. iv. 24.) knowledge and truth. Col. iii. 9, 10.

Thus Adam was originally formed perfectly holy and happy, appointed lord of all creation here below, and to be the head and parent of innumerable beings like himself.

And when God had thus laid the foundations of the earth, the glorious hosts above united in one song of praise; "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" and our divine Redeemer, as the Wisdom of God, is thus represented: "I was rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delight was with the sons of men."

Meditation.

How full of goodness is the Lord to us the children of men! Why should he thus favour and distinguish man? Oh the riches of his wisdom, grace, and love, who formed us out of nothing, to be like himself! What a fair and large dominion he has bestowed upon us! To him be glory.

4. ALL THINGS MADE TO GLORIFY GOD.

The Bible is very express upon this. "The Lord hath made all things for himself." Prov. xvi. 4. "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever." Rom. xi. 36.

And all things created do indeed set forth and display to

us the glory of the invisible God. His ETERNITY may be clearly seen in their creation. He was before anything else was. "Thy years are throughout all generations; of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure." Psalm cii. 14—26. His almighty POWER becomes manifest and obvious, when we look at the work of his hands. Rom. i. 20. His WISDOM shines infinitely and incomparably excellent, the more minutely we survey what he has formed, and compare it with the most skilful works of any of his creatures. His LOVING-KINDNESS is seen in the adapting of everything to its designed use; and his HOLINESS in the invariable tendency of sin to ultimate misery, and of righteousness to true happiness in the end, however we may first suffer.

When created, all was indeed pre-eminently beautiful and glorious: so that when God himself surveyed the whole, it is said, he "saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good:" each was perfect in its kind, fit for the end for which it was made, and all full of life, beauty, usefulness, and happiness.

But it must be acknowledged, many things appear far otherwise now; sin and disease, misery and death, abound on every side; spring and autumn, summer and winter, youth and age, cold and heat, want and fulness, all have their corresponding sorrows, trials, and afflictions; and all God's blessings may be, and often are, changed into curses. Deut. xxviii. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward!" Whence arises all these things! and how are they declaring the divine glory?

They spring from sin—the sin of man; and we shall see how God has taken occasion, from that sin the more remarkably to display himself and his own glory.

In the mean time, let his works speak his praise. Whatever man may be, God is perfect, and all his ways are mercy and truth, and the whole earth is full of his glory. The whole creation is one entire volume, and the sense of every line is God. His name is legible on every creature,

and he that sees not God at all, understands not the sense of creation. As it is eternal life to know God, so this God is the life of the creature which we know, and the knowing of him in it, is the life of all our knowledge.

Meditation.

" Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Shall not the creature glorify the Creator ? Is it not our reasonable—ought it not to be our most delightful service and duty ? O that we might always delight ourselves in the Lord, and rejoice in his greatness and goodness, and be helped to this through every part of this creation ! O that whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we may do all to the glory of God ! Alas ! alas ! how have I forgotten my Creator, and lived to myself, and disregarded thy glory ! May it henceforth be manifest in a grateful, praising life, that I am among thy saints, who shew forth thy praises, and bless thy holy name !

5. THE FALL AND RECOVERY OF MAN.

We cannot take a right view of the present state of creation, and God's glory in it, without a brief notice of the fall and recovery of man.

If God formed all so very good, how entered evil into our world ? The Bible tells us. It pleased God, after giving man the Lordship over the whole earth, to require from him one single, simple test of his obedience, saying, " Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat : for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii. 17. Tempted by the devil, who took the form of a serpent for that purpose, and whom the Bible reveals to us as a fallen spirit, the father of lies, and the adversary of man, our first parents believed that enemy more than God, and, captivated by the appearances of good, for the sake of obtaining the fancied good, they dis-

obeyed God, and took of the forbidden tree, and so lost their original righteousness, and man became "dead in trespasses and sins."

Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Man's nature was now fallen, and Adam now begat children in his own likeness, after his image: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

You must now, therefore, view all men as being by nature "children of wrath," conceived in iniquity, and born in sin, and that wholly and altogether through the fault of man.

But the great God, our Creator, had purposes of grace and mercy towards us, when we were rebellious and disobedient. These purposes he revealed in the sentence upon the serpent—"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." In this little sentence there is a whole Bible, a history of the world, and of the church of Christ. It is like that little acorn which contains all the parts from which the future magnificent tree hereafter shall spring. And, blessed be God! it emphatically points out the seed of the woman, who is our divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ, while he suffers for us, at length completely crushing our adversary, Satan.

Jesus Christ, our Lord, bears indeed the title of the second Adam, and "the last Adam who was made a quickening Spirit. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven; as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." He is the head of a new and recovered race of men, who shall be restored to more than all the original glory and blessedness of the first Adam. If "by one man's offence many were made sinners, much more they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

You may, in the whole history of the first Adam, dis-

cover much of God's grace revealed in the second Adam. He is the image of God, the head or father of a race ; his work affects his seed ; his dominion, his marriage, and the place where he dwelt, all these things may tell you much of Christ, and of our recovery in him.

Meditation.

Oh, how awful are the effects of sin and disobedience ! What tremendous evil one single act of unbelief and disobedience brought in upon our world ! God help me to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and utterly abhor it ! And how wonderful that divine wisdom, grace, and mercy, which has provided a way of recovery ? O that I may belong to Christ, the second Adam ! Let me count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that I may win Christ, and be found in him.

6. CREATION BEARS CONSTANT WITNESS OF REDEMPTION.

God has, in his infinite wisdom and continual providence, so ordered all things, that the whole world is full of lessons teaching us, every day, and every hour, salvation by Jesus Christ. The book of nature, as has been often shewn, is a picture to discover to us the book of grace ; and the Bible is the interpreter which makes plain the spiritual meaning of earthly things.

The sun shining in the heavens tells us some of the glory and some of the benefits of Christ Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness. The wind that blows where it listeth, and is invisible to the eye of sense, tells us something of the Holy Spirit who invisibly works where he pleases. The earthly father who pities his children, and provides for them, tells us something of that better Father, who is in heaven, and loves us on earth.

The house in which I dwell, the food which I eat, the clothes which I wear, the way in which I walk, the friend in whom I delight, the husband of my choice, the wife of my bosom,—all, to the spiritual eye, are full of Christ and

his salvation. We are surrounded thus with constant helps to the knowledge of the grace of Christ, and to the enjoyment of communion with him.

Especially by the mode in which all life is sustained, have we constant lessons of what are the just wages of sin, and of the doctrine of Christ's dying for us sinners, and of our living by his death. The whole providence of God in the world is life by death ; every thing speaks it as the present law of subsistence through the whole earth. Mr. Kirby, after shewing how animals live upon each other, says :—

"It may be remarked, with regard to this constant scene of destruction, this never universally intermitted war of one part of creation upon another, that the sacrifice of a part maintains the health and life of the whole. The great doctrine of *vicarious suffering* [or, one suffering for another] forms an article of physical or natural science ; and we discover, standing even upon this foundation, that the sufferings and death of one being may be, in the Divine counsels, and consistently with what we know of the general operations of Providence, the cause and instrument of the spiritual life and final salvation of infinite hosts of others. Thus does the animal kingdom in some sort preach the gospel of Christ."

He also states that "more than twenty punitive kinds of creatures infest man internally—in the brain, the bile, the blood, the kidneys, the muscle, the cellular tissue, and the intestines. Death alone proves with a greater strength of evidence than this army of scourges set in array against him, that man is fallen from his original state of integrity and favour with God."

What an interpreter of the state of man, and of the way of our salvation, then, is the book of nature !

Meditation.

O my soul ! use the helps which thy God hath given thee in creation, for learning those things which belong to thy everlasting salvation ! My God and Father ! be thou

my teacher, not only by giving me the light of thy precious word, and the book of creation, but thine own Spirit also to shine upon that word, and interpret that book, and make them clear, and to shine in my heart, and dispel all the mists of sin and all the darkness of ignorance, through Jesus Christ, our Lord!

7. THE NEW CREATION.

The Bible holds out to us a most blessed discovery of a new creation, begun now, and to be perfected hereafter.

This new creation is begun now in the children of God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new, and all things are of God." A real Christian is born again of God; "The new man, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." Our Lord Christ is the head and Lord of the new creation; "the image of the living God, the first-born of every creature; for by him were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

All who have received the Holy Ghost have been thus quickened or made alive; and being led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; his children, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, preparing for their heavenly inheritance. This is that new creation of which the Bible speaks much, (Psalm li. 10. Ephes. ii. 10. Gal. vi. 15.) and which is peculiar to the people of God. (2 Cor. v. 17.) O my readers! be not content without having this clear and manifest to your souls. You will never share the new creation glories hereafter, if you have never obtained the new-creating Spirit of God here. Call, then, earnestly upon God, "Create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me." Plead with constancy his gracious promises: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you;" and never be

content till this mighty change be effectually wrought in your hearts by the grace of God.

There is a promise also of a new heavens and a new earth: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind; but be ye glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create," Isaiah lxv. 17, 18. So the apostle Peter, after describing the destruction of the present world by fire, says, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. This new heaven and new earth being the habitation of righteousness, made to give gladness and everlasting joy, must be unspeakably blessed and glorious. The apostle Paul speaks at large on this subject. He describes the whole creation as exceedingly longing for it. God's glory is then eminently to be revealed in his children; and we are told, "The earnest expectation of the creature [or creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God; for the creature [or creation] was made subject to vanity not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope. Because the creature [or creation] itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies."

The present state of sin and misery is not, therefore, to continue for ever; we may and should earnestly thirst after and long for a far better state of things, which God has promised, and which all who truly believe in his Son shall obtain.

Prayer for a new heart.

O thou that hearest prayer, and hast said, "Ask and ye shall have, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you; call upon me, and I will answer thee,

and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not :" behold me, a most sinful creature, coming to thy throne of grace, and asking for mercy and grace from thee, the God of mercy and the God of all grace, in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ. Thou hast promised to give a new heart and a new spirit ; and infinitely do I need these blessings, for my heart is full of deceit, vile, and desperately wicked. Oh give me, I entreat thee, the new heart and the new spirit ! a heart sensible of sin, hating all iniquity, enlightened with the knowledge of thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ ; a heart dead to the world, and devoted to Christ my Saviour, and full of love to God and man.

Work in me, O my Father ! to will ; work in me, O my Father ! to do. Has not Jesus declared, that without him I can do nothing ? Hast not thou testified, thy grace is sufficient for me ? I believe thy word. I implore that all-sufficient grace. Oh, leave me not to myself. Come, Divine Spirit ! and deliver my soul. Visit me, O my God ! with thy salvation, and satisfy me with thy early mercy. I have no plea to offer but the name of Jesus ; I have no claim in myself but my great necessity, and total ruin through sin ; everything in me deserves only thy wrath ; but here is my claim, here is my hope—the precious promises of thy word and the blood of thine only son. And give me grace never to cease pleading these with thee, till I obtain those promises, and have an abundant entrance ministered unto me into thy everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

8. THE VOICE OF ALL CREATION PRAISING GOD.

In the Book of Psalms, particularly from the 145th to the end, the whole creation is called to praise God our Saviour. It is a song yet to be sung here on earth. It is the right, the reasonable, the happy voice of all creation. It is foretold and anticipated in that bright vision of glory—" I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels

round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that is in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Everything, inanimate as well as living, is brought before us in the Psalms, as praising the great Jehovah. In the heavens above, sun and moon, stars of light, heaven of heavens, and waters above the heavens ; on the earth, fire and hail, snow and vapours, stormy winds fulfilling his word ; mountains and hills, trees, beasts, and all cattle, creeping things, and flying fowls, are called upon to praise and magnify him. And who are to be the priests leading and offering up this general song of praise ? Christians are priests and kings unto God and the Father. Rev. i. 6.

Every part of creation now also should be considered as stirring us up to praise the Creator ; and as we are to pray without ceasing, so in and for everything should we give thanks. What a life of praise should be the life of the Christian, who believes in Jesus, and knows that all things work together for his good !

And who can tell the happy state of that immortal spirit, in perfect oneness with the great God, delighting and rejoicing in him ; basking in the sunshine of his love, who is altogether glorious and lovely, and having him who has all things for a full portion ? Oh, what a blessed state, even upon earth, in the land of sin and sorrow, trial and temptation, is that of the soul when, rising through Jesus above these lower scenes, it can for a little time be occupied in the exulting song of redeeming love, and the glorious hope of a heavenly kingdom ! But what will it be when faith is lost in sight, and hope in full enjoyment, and we are evermore exalting and magnifying our God with

countless hosts of similarly happy beings, for all those higher blessings which shall then on every side stream around us, through his overflowing bounty and loving-kindness.

That there is so little of praise now, shows how far we are fallen from God. The Sabbath-day is indeed publicly appointed to be a memorial of the first creation, completed in the first Adam, and of the new creation, to be completed by the second Adam : and every Christian will carefully keep holy this Sabbath. But, by and bye, the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, for which we, according to his promise, are looking, will be manifested. In that blessed day, when the invitation comes from the throne, " Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great," there will be " heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth ; let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him." Amen.

9. PRAYERS.

(1.) *Prayer rightly to improve the works of creation.*

O thou who didst create all things that are in heaven and earth, and after furnishing the earth with innumerable proofs of thy wisdom, power, and goodness, didst place man there to be lord of all, and to offer unto thee continual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, I beseech thee, let me by these thy works continually ascend in heart to thee, my Father ! Oh let not my soul cleave so as it has done to mere earthly things, to dust and vanity ; but quicken me, for thy name's sake ! And as thou art my Father, by creating me, so be still more my Father by creating me unto righteousness, and adopting me into thy family, and let all the works of thy creation, which surround me on every side, constantly lead me to holy and delightful intercourse and communion with thee ! Be not thou as a

stranger to my soul! Oh suffer me not to be alienated from thee, my God! Let not thy gifts be turned into sin and rebellion by my resting in them, but be continual means of helping me to see and know, and to love and walk with thee, my God, all the day long. Hear me, for Jesus Christ's sake.

(2.) *Thanksgiving to God for his Works of Creation and Redemption.*

Almighty Father, Lord of heaven and earth, who didst make the worlds by Jesus Christ, whom thou hast appointed heir of all things, how can we enough praise thy name, that thou hast been so mindful of man, and formed such creatures here for his use, and given him dominion over all! The earth is full of thy riches, and so is the great and wide sea also; and thou hast given all things to us, that we might, in the enjoyment of all, see thy love, and for ever bless thy name. We, thy sinful creatures, formed and sustained by thy power, and brought nigh again to thee by the blood of Jesus, do give thee praise and glory for all thy works of creation and providence, and every blessing of this life. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. But, oh, what thanksgivings we owe thee for the wondrous work of redemption, and that amazing gift of love, thine only-begotten Son, to be the Redeemer and Restorer of lost man! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away! O our God! may we ever rejoice with joy unspeakable in the hope of that glory, when all things shall be restored, and the heavens shall rejoice, and the earth be glad, and all that is therein, before the Lord. And as thou hast called us out of darkness into thy glorious light, that we might ever praise thee, help us constantly to show forth thy praises, and live to thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

PROVIDENCE.

1. The nature of Providence—2. General Providence—3. Particular Providence—4. Providence in our temporal circumstances—5. Providence affecting the soul—6. The triumphing of the wicked short—7. Good brought out of evil—8. The signs of the times—9. Due regard to the Providence of God.

1. THE NATURE OF PROVIDENCE.

Of all the endearing names which the great God bears, and by which he manifests his character to us, that of Father is one of the most instructive and delightful: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." It is a name full of encouragement, full of comfort, and full of hope; shewing us his care and love, and teaching his children their high and happy prospects, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

This name, too, peculiarly points out to us the providence of God, as it shews us that he guides and governs all things for the good of his family, and assures us of the provision which he has made for all their wants.

By providence we mean the care of God over the beings which he has created: he watches over, directs, governs, and provides for them, and all concerning them; maintaining and ordering all things to his own glory, and according to his own good pleasure.

Men use the words *chance* and *accident*, good or bad *luck*, and good or bad *fortune*, respecting events unforeseen and unexpected. These words tend to obscure God's providence, or are used without meaning; for it is clear, from

God's word, that nothing comes to pass carelessly, or as a matter of indifference.

Not that God in any way is the author of sin ; his word is express on this point: "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man ; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." The root and blame of sin is all in man. God forbids, hates, and punishes all sin, but he has permitted it for greater good in the end—to display more of his own glory, ultimately to add to the blessedness of his recovered and redeemed creatures, and, now, in Jesus, by whom "all things consist," that sinners may have "a day of grace."

He also "sitteth on the flood ;" his kingdom rules over all. He punishes even now the wicked : "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it ?" The most cruel tyrants are merely "the rod of his anger." How striking God's language respecting Sennacherib, king of Assyria, when he was boasting of what he had done ! 2 Kings xix.

Two leading parts of the providence of God are preservation and government.

1. Preservation.—He preserves living beings, and maintains a succession of them ; he also preserves a succession of the productions of the earth for the use of man.

2. Government consists in directing the actions of his creatures ; permitting, but effectually controlling and overruling all their evil actions ; and inspiring, aiding, and concurring with all their good actions. It also consists in distributing, with perfect equity, punishments to the wicked ; and, with sovereign grace, mercy, and loving-kindness, as well as equity, rewards to the righteous, according to their obedience or disobedience to him. Though there may be wheels within wheels, and one wheel may seem, as in a watch, to run contrary to another, yet all shall display the wisdom of God, and fully answer his good and holy ends.

Meditation.

This is indeed a blessed truth, that I am not left as an orphan, destitute and unprovided for, but have an Almighty Friend and Father who cares for me. I see on every side the selfishness of fallen man; I feel the power of this corruption in my own heart. But, O! how delightful the thought, that there is one full of wisdom, riches, power, and love, always at hand, and ordering all for me! I need be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let my requests be made known unto him. Lord, help me thus to call upon the most high God, who performeth all things for me, and to enjoy all the peace and blessedness of full confidence in thy love!

2. GENERAL PROVIDENCE.

By the general providence of God is intended that constant and universal care which he manifests over all his creatures, and which is an ever-present witness of his wisdom, power, and loving-kindness: "God left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." The whole human race is thus constantly partaking of his bounty and goodness, reminded of his existence and his concern for us, and taught to seek after him. Acts xvii. 25—28.

This providence of God is so extensive that it reaches to the very smallest and most minute circumstances. It is a great mistake that God is too great to concern himself about little things. You judge from the feeble powers of your fellow-creatures. You see man here can only be present in one place, and do one thing at a time, and has only a certain measure of strength and ability; but you forget that God has all perfections of every kind that we can know or imagine, centered in himself. He is everywhere present, has almighty power, and has infinite wisdom,

forethought and love ; and can and does direct, uphold, and govern all at once. His greatness is specially to be discovered in his care of the minutest things : " Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." What a wonderful knowledge and providence do these things teach us !

Our Lord shews us that the same providence of God is concerned in providing for the fowls of the air and the grass of the fields. Matt. vi.

How delightful it is to see in every thing the loving-kindness of God ! Truly every blade of grass, every leaf that grows on the tree, every bird that flies in the air, says in the Christian's ear, " The God who made me what I am, will do more for you. O trust in him, O love him, and shew forth his praise."

Immediately after the deluge, the course of general providence was revealed : " I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood ; while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." We ourselves are living witnesses of the faithfulness of this covenant : and every time that we see the beautiful rainbow in the clouds, we have God's token of this covenant, and his pledge of his gracious providence.

To enter into the full history of general providence would be endless. The whole of the movements of the sun and moon, the earth and the planets, and of the starry sky beyond them, the varied seasons of the year, the animals that people the earth, the air, the sea, and the rivers, the innumerable productions of every kind in those different parts of creation, and their effects and uses, the regularity with which seasons move on, and animals migrate and return again ;—these, and thousands of other things, are to the Christian continually displaying the kind care and love of God our Father. To him, every breeze that blows on earth, every ray of light, every drop that falls from the

sky, every breath of air that he inhales, every particle of food which he eats, is from a Father's hand and a Father's love. He can say, "I know that the Lord is great, and that our God is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas, and all deep places.

Meditation.

O blessed knowledge, which, amidst all the darkness, and guilt, and sorrow of this transient world, shews me the infallible but all-wise, gracious, powerful, and compassionate hand of my heavenly Father, guiding every thing, however great or however small; no chance, no accident, but all for the best to them that love him! May this knowledge lead me to prayer, confidence, peace, hope, and much joy, through Jesus our Lord.

3. PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE.

By particular providence is meant that which relates to nations or individuals. "Many seek the ruler's favour, but every man's judgment cometh from the Lord." Prov. xxix. 26. This is a most cheering and consoling truth to the children of God. There is no poor man in his cottage, who is trusting in Jesus Christ and loving God, but may be assured that God is making all things work together for his good, however humble he may be in the world, or however disregarded he may be by his fellow-creatures. It is a beautiful saying of St. Augustine, "God takes as much care of each particular, as if each were all, and as much care of all as if all were but one particular."

1. God deals providentially with NATIONS. "When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." The beginnings of each nation were under the leading and guidance of God; he determined the bounds of their habitation. As he meant to make Israel the keepers of his

truth, and the means of blessing to the whole earth, he placed their land in the most central part of that earth, with the most easy means of communication to every other land.

What a mercy it is, amidst all our national rebellions and disregard of God's glory, that he still preserves among us the light of his truth, and his own word in its purity. While other nations are wholly left in the darkness of popery, infidelity, mahomedanism, or paganism, O how much do we owe to God's good providence for our national mercies, in first sending to us the gospel, and then in raising up our blessed Reformers to revive among us the pure light of divine truth, and maintaining that light for three centuries. To God be all the glory!

2. God deals providentially with INDIVIDUALS. Each particular person is a child of providence, and may say of God, "he performeth the thing that is appointed for me." This providence is more extraordinary and remarkable in some than in others, but there is no one who has not had direct and gracious interferences and manifestations of God's goodness again and again. "His tender mercies are over all his works." Some of the books of scripture eminently display this particular providence in individuals. Look at the history of JOSEPH. Observe first his father's partiality, his brethren's envy, his dreams, his sale to the Ishmaelites, his being bought by Potiphar, his being cast into prison; his meeting there Pharaoh's officers, his interpreting their dreams, and then being sent to interpret Pharaoh's; his being subsequently raised to be governor of Egypt, and thus the preservation of his whole family. What a life of providence! Look at the history of MOSES. His birth at such a dangerous time, his exposure, Pharaoh's daughter passing by, her compassion and committing him to his mother, his education, his flight to Midian, his return, and deliverance of his whole nation.—What a chain of providence! Look at the history of RUTH. A famine compels Naomi and her husband to fly to the country of Moab with their sons. The sons there marry

Orpah and Ruth, Moabitish women, and then the husband of Naomi and the sons die. Naomi returns ; Ruth, from love to the God of Israel, returns with her. See the whole history of her growing intercourse with Boaz, their marriage, and her ultimately becoming thus the ancestor of a race of monarchs, and of the Messiah himself. The book of ESTHER is full of similar providences. The name of God occurs not indeed in the book, but every part is full of his gracious and direct interposition.

And can you not, Christian reader, find innumerable instances of the same gracious providence in your own life ? How have your best blessings come—looked for or unlooked for ? By your own contrivance, or by God's gracious gift and disposal ? O what lessons of providence has your own life, I confidently appeal to your conscience, set before you ! That you have been spared time after time, that you have been preserved from imminent danger, that you have been helped through times of trial beyond all your expectations, to what was it owing ? Not to your wisdom, sufficiency and forethought, but to the wisdom, sufficiency and kind providence of your gracious God and Father.

Meditation.

God has indeed dealt most graciously with me ! Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto ? O what displays of loving-kindness on God's part, and of disregard of God on my part ! Well may he complain, "the Ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Lord, give me a better mind for the time to come.

4. PROVIDENCE IN OUR TEMPORAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Look back at the ways God has led you—see how he has from day to day provided for you. You have lived so many days, weeks, months, and years, and never perhaps

been a day without food, clothing, protection and help. All were his gifts. He has fed you all your life long, (Gen. xlviii. 15.) and his mercies have been new every morning. He has thought of you when you have never thought of him. He has provided for you when you have totally disregarded the very hand that has given you all things.

One of the titles by which God is known is "the Preserver of men." Job vii. 20. And which of us have not found it true in our lives? He has raised us, perhaps again and again, from sickness, and preserved us from expected destruction. How many have perished by things which have done you no injury! You have probably yet the possession of limbs, faculties, and senses, and a good measure of health and strength; and when you know in how many thousand ways these might be injured every day, what but the care of him who "never slumbereth nor sleepeth," could have kept all these unhurt from year to year to the present moment.

God's children have often a very rich experience of his faithfulness in providing for their temporal wants in their extremities. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." The excellent Isaac Ambrose, who wrote that valuable book called "Looking unto Jesus," once was in great distress, and receiving unexpected relief, he observed, "One morsel of God's provision, especially when it comes unexpected and upon prayer, when wants are most, will be more sweet to spiritual relish, than all former enjoyments were."

God has in every way encouraged us to trust in him implicitly, for giving us all that is good for us. He appeals to the power of paternal feelings, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." He appeals to his care of birds and of fowls, and asks, "Are ye not much better than they?" He appeals to the life which he has given and the body which he has formed, and says, "Is not the life

more than meat, and the body than raiment ?" May the Lord himself then remove all unbelief from your hearts, and enable you to be at perfect peace, with a mind stayed upon him, under the cheering hope expressed by St. Paul, "My God shall supply all your need out of his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

He knows what things we have need of. The poor may be afraid employment shall fail them, times become harder, and their difficulties be so increased that they shall be unable to get food for themselves and their families ; but God will at such times manifest more of his goodness in the seasonableness of his mercy.

Meditation.

How rich, O my God, are thy promises ! I may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, Jesus is my Shepherd, I shall not want. "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." He who commanded the ravens to feed Elijah ; he who allowed not the widow's barrel of meal and cruise of oil to fail ; he who fed 4000 and 5000 with a few loaves and fishes, will still provide for the wants of all that trust in him.

5. PROVIDENCE AFFECTING THE SOUL.

The wonders of Providence here are marvellous ! Not to speak of those things which concern our Lord Jesus Christ, and the way in which Providence brought to pass all that had been foretold concerning him ; not to speak of the whole history of the church of God, a bush always burning but never consumed, a spark in the ocean and yet never extinguished : let us notice other things.

There is the Bible lying on your table. How came it there ? You have it in your hands by a series of wonderful providences, for upwards of 3000 years. From age to age, the wicked have hated it, and sought to destroy it. There

have been periods of general darkness, superstition, and ignorance, in which it seemed probable that it would be wholly lost. There have been periods when it was death to a Christian to have it in his possession. It has passed through innumerable hands, from copy to copy, in manuscript, for ages, and now you have it entire and complete, the word of God, a lamp to your feet and a light to your path.

You live in a Protestant country! By what wonderful providences were we delivered from the abominations of popery, and what unlikely instruments were used for that purpose. A wicked, violent, and arbitrary monarch quarrels with the pope, and thus God opens the door for separation from idolatrous Rome, and for the religious freedom and blessedness of the Reformation. In all the steps of that separation, 300 years ago, the Christian may discover innumerable traces of the hand of him who brings good out of evil, and overcomes evil with good. The same providence marked the Revolution of 1688. What God has done for us should lead us to earnest prayer, that in these changing and troublous times he may yet appear for us, and lead us to repentance, and still spare and bless us!

How gracious to us the dispensation, if indeed we really know our mercies, and believe in the God of our salvation, that we had our birth in this land, and at this time, with so many advantages for becoming wise unto salvation! The large supply of pious books circulating through this country is another gracious providence. How much has God used such books as Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and Wilberforce's Practical View, to the good of innumerable souls!

The providence of God in converting men to himself is indeed full of wonders, and full of variety. Some are gradually brought by Christian education, or by slow communication of spiritual light to a right mind. Others, like Paul and the jailer, Colonel Gardiner and John Newton, are more suddenly converted. By nature men are dark and blind; but God fulfils to his children the pro-

mise, " I will bring the blind by a way they know not." Isaiah xlii. 16.

Have you, reader, been brought to Christ ? Can you say, " God, who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ ! " And if so, cannot you see in the way that you have been brought, innumerable tokens of the loving-kindness of God. Whether it was the book you read, the friend you conversed with, the minister you heard, the affliction you passed through, the danger you escaped, that first turned your heart,—it was God's special grace, in his providence, that gave the real blessing.

The same providence is richly displayed in preserving men from temptation. What Christian can here look back without special thankfulness ? Again and again he has been on the very verge of grievously sinning against God to the great dishonour of his name, and he has been wonderfully withheld and delivered ! Abigail meets David just in the height of his anger, and turns him from sin. Laban is prevented by a dream from injuring Jacob. Joseph is kept by a holy thought, given to him in the hour of trial, from the temptation which his wicked mistress presented to him. God frequently shews us how weak and helpless we are, and then in the critical moment, sends us unexpected help, that we may glorify his great name. His providence, in marking sins with present evils, furnishes his people with a real help to obedience. The punishment of the sins of God's people in this world is very observable. Jacob's deceit, David's adultery and murder, Samson's licentiousness, met with remarkable and corresponding chastisements. " We are chastened now of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

Healing the backslidings of his children manifests many a gracious providence. Often the work of grace in the heart seems to have ceased, and all to have become dead and formal. And then that truth is seen, " he restoreth

my soul, he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." By some unlooked-for means, our wandering spirit is recalled back to God, a new supply of spiritual life and strength is given, and our backslidings are healed, God's work is again revived, and we press forward with renewed vigour in the Christian race. To be kept still IN THE WAY to Zion, Oh what a mercy is this!

Praise for Spiritual Mercies.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Oh, what thanks and what love I owe thee, my heavenly Father, for the rich and full spiritual privileges and blessings which I enjoy? What more could have been done for me? Only give me the heart to love, only open thou my lips that they may show forth thy praise; make me thine, wholly, unreservedly, and for ever.

6. THE TRIUMPHING OF THE WICKED IS SHORT.

That which has most exercised the mind of good men in every age has been, the prosperity of the wicked. David, in one of his Psalms (the 73d), speaks of this as almost occasioning his fall, and the slipping of his feet. Jeremiah asks, "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" Both David and Jeremiah then show that this is preparatory to their greater destruction. "I understood their end; thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castedst them down into destruction." In the 37th Psalm, David enters fully into this subject. He says, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree: yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not." So Solomon testifies, "the prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we have a history which displays the righteous providence of God, making that clear hereafter which seems unequal here.

The rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, lived in ease and luxury, thoughtless of his sick neighbours. The poor man, full of sores, perished "at his doors." But who can envy the rich, now tormented in hell? or feel that the lot of poor Lazarus, now in Abraham's bosom, was really the harder lot? A future judgment will speedily set right all temporal inequalities.

It is true that the wicked in worldly things have apparent advantage; they seem to carry all before them, and the righteous suffer and find no relief. These things are so much the case that the apostle describes the CALLING of the Christian to be, to do well and suffer for it, and take it patiently, in imitation of Christ, who suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps. A righteous tradesman will suffer many losses in business by never breaking the Sabbath nor deceiving others. A faithful man who does not seek to please men by flattery, will be less acceptable to them. A devoted Christian who will not walk after the course of this world, and condemns it by his heavenly spirit and conversation, will be sure to be evil spoken of. But all this is a part of the cross that is to be counted upon. After fully estimating the matter, St. Paul says, "I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Yet generally, even in this world, "the path of the just is as the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day." But sometimes the righteous suffer, like Lazarus, to the end; and their full reward is always hereafter. This is the abundant recompense —"If we suffer we shall also reign with him." Christians must count the cost, and take up their cross daily and follow Christ, if they would be his disciples, and share his coming glory.

For the holy Scriptures tell us of a day of wrath and punishment yet to come upon the ungodly. They foretel a period when the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. This may well guard us against envying their present prosperity,

and lead us rather, while fleeing ourselves from the wrath to come, to look at them as our Saviour did at Jerusalem, with weeping and tender compassion, and earnest prayers, that they may yet know the things which belong to their peace.

And, in the end, how awful and destructive is God's providence towards notorious sinners! Hardened (as Pharaoh was) by the things that should have been for their healing, he leaves them alone (as he left the Ammonites), till their iniquities make them fully ripe for his judgment. Every thing becomes to them an occasion of stumbling and fall. "God endures with much long-suffering these vessels of wrath," till at length, after long patience and forbearance, he executes his awful judgments upon them, and they perish for ever.

Meditation.

O Lord, though clouds and darkness are round about thee, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of thy throne. Thou hast done all things well. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation."

7. GOOD BROUGHT OUT OF EVIL.

It may be truly said, the world is full of sin and full of misery. Satan, the God of this world, reigns in the hearts of the wicked, and they are the greater number everywhere. Evil has the chief sway among men, and the world is full of seasonable, suitable, and prevailing temptations to what is wrong. The sun shines, and the rain descends upon the evil as well as the good, and hence, "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." How can this be if there is an almighty, wise, and gracious Providence!

Augustine meets this case well. He says, "God, who is

infinitely good, would never permit evil, were he not infinitely wise, and knew how to bring good out of evil." It is the preparation for a greater good in the end. When a house is to be built, instead of the stones or bricks rising at once from the ground, the ground itself is dug into for a good foundation. When a rich crop is to be produced, the land must be manured with dung and soil, which seem to cover the grass and hinder the flowers springing up, and to be quite opposite to the ends to be attained. Bishop Hopkins remarks, "so God permits wicked men to dung the earth with their filth, that those attributes of his which seem to be buried under them may afterwards spring up with the greater lustre and glory: from hence he will reap the richer crop of praise to himself. Sometimes he glorifies the severity of his justice by hardening them in their sins to their own destruction; sometimes the riches of his mercy by calling the greatest and most flagitious sinners to repentance, and granting them pardon; and always his infinite patience and forbearance in not executing present vengeance upon those who so daringly provoke him."

Thus God makes known to his creatures, by his dealings with them, that he is Jehovah; and manifests to them his own character, perfections, and glory. The permission of evil has remarkably manifested the God of glory. By this is developed his truth, power, wrath, justice, and holiness on the one hand, and his wisdom, grace, mercy, loving-kindness, and faithfulness on the other, in a way in which they never could otherwise have been manifested, not only to men, but also to heavenly beings. The apostle speaks of the calling of the Gentiles being "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God."

Thus also our God raises his faithful people to eminent glory hereafter. They are prepared for this glory by a course of instruction and suffering. They are now in the state of scholars, in a school where their graces are to be called forth, strengthened, and matured for their future

condition, that they may be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. How could repentance, faith, patience, meekness, long-suffering, truth, integrity, love, and holiness, be felt in our hearts, or seen and proved, but in such a world as that in which we now live, with such corruptions as we now have within and without. The world of the wicked is the furnace that purifies the gold of the church ; it is the workshop in which the vessels of mercy, by innumerable touches and blows of the tools of God's providence, are made fit for the mansions of bliss and glory. But of all the displays of good brought out of evil, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is the most stupendous, extensive, and astonishing. We shall know it fully only in eternity.

What developements, also, will the second coming of our Lord, and the general judgment of all men, and the future reward of the righteous, and punishment of the wicked, make of the wisdom and justice, patience and forbearance, holiness and loving-kindness, of all God's dealings with men ! Providence is now all wrapped up like the bud ;— it will be opened when the Sun of righteousness returns and shines in his glory.

Meditation.

O Lord, wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, thou art my God, I will exalt thee and I will praise thy name. It is but little that I can now see of thy way, but that little shows me thou art glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, and doing wonders. Soon I hope to see thee as thou art, and know as I am known ; and till then, I will trust thee, and be assured that the Judge of all the earth must do right. Most we glorify him now when we can least fathom his counsels, and yet confide in his truth, and holiness, and love.

8. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The holy Scriptures speak to us very plainly of the duty

of discerning the signs of the times. "A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment." Eccles. viii. 5. Our Saviour reproved the Pharisees as hypocrites, because they could not discern the signs of the times. Matt. xvi. The children of Issachar are singled out as "men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." 1 Chron. xii. 32. And John the Baptist was merely referred by our Lord to the events that were then taking place, as proving the first coming of Christ. Matt. xi.

The signs of the times in which we live are very remarkable, and should by no means be overlooked by the Christian. We have seen, in the last forty years, many revolutions and changes, a great overthrow of kingdoms, and a wasting away of the power and wealth of Mahomedan and Papal countries. We see now a remarkable prevalence of iniquity, answering to such descriptions as are given in 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. 2 Pet. iii. and Jude. We see also a very extraordinary diffusion of the gospel, corresponding to Rev. xiv. 5; and a concern for the Jews, corresponding to Psalm cii. 13, 14. Rom. xi. 31. No one can calmly and wisely look on the face of the earth without seeing that the present times are very remarkable. Many think that they are such as will rapidly lead on to those very remarkable changes in the state of the world which God has predicted at the second coming of our Lord.

Now, we ought not to be like the scoffers, who say, Where is the promise of his coming? nor like the careless servant, who says, My Lord delayeth his coming; but rather like the wise virgins, watchful and diligent, gathering oil into our vessels, and preparing to meet the Bridegroom, that when he comes he may find us ready. The voice of Providence, as well as of the divine Redeemer, seems especially now, in the wasting of the Turkish empire, which includes the river Euphrates (Rev. xvi. 12), and in the unclean spirits now abroad, to give this lesson: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." And what a blessed hope is this to the Christian! (Titus

ii. 13) ; how holy and purifying ! (1 John iii. 1—3) ; how comforting ! (1 Thess. iv. 18) ; and how infinitely desirable ! The last lingering words of the book of Revelation are, " He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly ; " and the reply of every believer should be, " Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. xxii. 21.)

Prayer with reference to these times.

Lord, thou hast given me my birth in remarkable days, full of important events : oh give me wisdom to discern the signs of the times, and to know in this my day the things which belong unto my peace ! Often hast thou forewarned us that thou wilt return suddenly and unexpectedly as a thief, and that thy day shall come as a snare on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth ; I earnestly beseech thee, then, to grant me grace, that my heart may not be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life ; but oh ! help me to watch and pray always, that I may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of Man. Almighty Father, give me thy Spirit, that I may be found among the wise virgins, ready for my Lord's coming. Hear me, for his name's sake. Amen !

9. DUE REGARD TO GOD'S PROVIDENCES.

There may be a great abuse of Providence : as when a wicked man pleads a divine mission for his wickedness : " The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it," (2 Kings xviii. 25); or when he pleads the uncertainty of life for self-gratification : " Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die ; " or charges God foolishly : " I am tempted of God," (James i. 13) ; " Why doth he yet find fault ? for who hath resisted his will ? " (Rom. ix. 19.)

Conformity to Providence is our duty. To every thing there is a season. Eccles. iii. 1. St. Paul learned how to be full, and how to suffer want. " In the day of adversity " we must " consider ; despise not the chastening of

the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. In the day of prosperity be joyful :" be thankful to the Giver of all your mercies. Ps. ciii.

The leadings of Providence should guide us. These leadings will sometimes, like a pillar of cloud and fire, make your path clear. At other times it will be very doubtful. What God would have us to do is then to be gathered, not from our wishes, nor merely from impulses on the mind, but from what, after thought, prayer, and consulting with experienced and pious friends, appears by his word to be the path of duty : that will ever be the true wisdom.

Reliance on Divine Providence is a most clear and blessed duty. " Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment ? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." We need not have one anxiety about worldly things, but should have a noble confidence in God that he will provide for us, " casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you." What a superiority does this reliance give in the midst of the alarms and tumults of this troublesome world !

Constantly to observe the providence of God is a sure way to see many. It is an old saying—" He that watches God's providences will never want a providence to watch." The striking display of God's dealings with men, recorded in the 107th Psalm, is closed with this promise : " Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." This will show us prayers answered, and quicken us to continued prayer ; (Psalm cxvi. 1, 2) ; it will greatly increase our faith, (2 Cor. i. 10 ; Matt. xvi. 9) ; and it will furnish us with abundant matter for praise.

Providence must be regarded with a direct reference to God's word. That word is a key of Providence. They answer to each other as the key to its lock ; or as a full

and just exposition to a short text. Providence is the most lively and instructive of all commentaries on the word. It is the fulfilment of promise—the manifestation of threatenings—the accomplishment of prophecies—the living illustration of God's mind and will. History is the unfolding of Bible truth in actual life and experience, and it answers to it as a key to its lock. There is nothing happens to you, or in the world, of which the Bible does not show both the spring and the issue. It is a sure guide to lead you into that path which conducts to true peace here, and everlasting happiness hereafter.

A due noticing of God's Providence is a great help to daily communion with the Father of our mercies. When Jacob surveyed the way that God had led him, he said, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shewed thy servant." This observing of Providence led David to see in Absalom's rebellion the hand of God, and to look through Shimei's curses to God's blessing. Oh how sweet is that Christian experience which makes everything that happens a means of raising the heart to God—all our life a Providence—and every Providence an act of faith and love, of prayer and of praise!

To attain this, two things are all essential—

First, To VIEW EVERYTHING IN CHRIST JESUS. He is the purchaser and the channel of every mercy. With him God freely gives us all things. Without him we can do nothing, and we deserve nothing but wrath; but "all are yours," when "ye are Christ's."

Secondly, To RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST. All our sufficiency being of God, the gift of his Spirit is absolutely needful to raise our hearts to communion with the Father of our spirits in his daily Providence.

Meditation.

When David had gone through the particulars of God's Providence in the creation and preservation of all things, he concluded it thus:—"I will sing unto the Lord as long as

I live : I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet ; I will be glad in the Lord." Psalm civ. 33, 34. Oh that these may be, more and more, my daily feelings and experience ! Grant, O my God ! that the steps of thy Providence, through thy Son, may be as a ladder from earth to heaven, on which I ascend day by day, and get nearer and nearer sights of thy ways and glory.

CHAPTER V.

ON REDEMPTION BY CHRIST.

1. On the Nature of Redemption—2. The Redeemer—3. The Extent of Redemption—4. The Rejection of Redemption—5. The Reception of Redemption—6. The Benefits of Redemption—7. The Completion of Redemption.

1. ON THE NATURE OF REDEMPTION.

THE word Redemption means, to buy again with a price. It is applied in the scriptures to the recovery of man from that state of slavery under sin and death to which his fall had reduced him, by our Lord Jesus Christ enduring the penalty of our sins, and shedding his blood as our ransom. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by traditions from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who by him do believe in God."

It includes the whole of man's recovery from his ruin: the atonement made on the cross, when Christ "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" the adoption of sons, (Gal. iii. 26.) deliverance from the power of sin, (Matt. i. 21.) and, finally, a rescue from the grave, hell, and everlasting ruin, and bringing us in the way of holiness, to endless glory.

The divine justice requires the punishment of sin; the divine truth requires the fulfilment of God's threatenings;

the wisdom of the divine government, the good of all creation, the glory of God in the establishment of his law—which is holy, just, and good—demand that transgressors should die. To meet these, and innumerable other claims, and yet to save mankind with a holy salvation, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." His redemption far more illustriously displays the divine perfections than if all had perished. It fills all holy creatures with wonders of admiration at the beauties and glories of our God ; rescues innumerable lost souls, and causes their admiring love of God, and delight in him through eternity. While they are completely renewed after the divine image, the most awfully righteous display of his everlasting wrath will visit those who neglect such a stupendous provision of grace and mercy.

The prime moving cause of this redemption is represented to be love. "God is love. Herein is love : not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. In his love and in his pity he redeemed us." Boundless, unfathomable, inconceivable love—a love that passeth knowledge—was the cause of our redemption. We can trace it no higher, and in this is sweet rest and satisfaction to our souls.

Meditation on God's love in Redemption.

It was great love in God, my Father, to create me out of nothing, a rational being, the head of his creatures on earth, and then to surround me with so many blessings as he daily does in his providence. But when I had by sin and rebellion forfeited all, and justly incurred his righteous wrath, O what tender compassion it was that led him in his pity and love to redeem me at such a price ! O Lord, teach me to see, and know, to believe, and rejoice evermore in this love ! Let me not any more wrong thy truth, and ruin my own soul by the fearful guilt of unbelief ! Work in my heart true faith, the gift of thine own Spirit !

2. THE REDEEMER.

This is one of the precious titles of our divine Saviour, in which we shall through eternity rejoice. "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," is the song of the glorified host above; and the Lord grant, Christian reader, that we may be among the happy number of those who shall for ever join in it.

The name Redeemer has a reference to an appointment, under the law of Moses, and of the nearest kinsman paying the price of the redemption of an inheritance (Lev. xv.), and being the avenger of blood to pursue and kill the murderer, (Numb. xxxv.) Our Redeemer both paid the ransom price for the redemption of our souls and of our forfeited inheritance, and has with his Almighty arm conquered all our foes.

This glorious Redeemer is THE TRUE GOD! (1 John v. 20.) Survey the supreme glory of our Redeemer. From the beginning he had glory with the Father before the world was. "As for our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel." (Isaiah xlvii. 17.) He can say, "I am the Lord thy God!" (Isaiah xlviii. 17.) "He is over all, God, blessed for ever:" the only-begotten Son of the Father.

This glorious being, as the church of England states, "the Son, which is the word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature into the womb of the blessed virgin, of her substance, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men."

O what a mystery is here! "God was manifest in the

flesh." Surely this ought to attract and fill every mind, and infinitely engage the affection and admiration of us sinners.

Consider next his HUMILIATION : " He who was in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant ; he, who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." By hanging on that tree he " was made a curse for us," and so he redeemed us from the curse. O what a height and depth, and length and breadth of love, untold and inconceivable love, was there ! " Though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich." Well may the scriptures say, " God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Consider farther his EXALTATION : " Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father." Jesus now reigns over all things ; everything is delivered into his hands. Our Redeemer is strong and mighty, omnipotent, the Almighty.

What then is his CHARACTER ? Beautiful beyond all expression ; unequalled in every perfection ; " chief among ten thousand ; altogether lovely." Every grace, every excellence, all wisdom, holiness, truth, equity, purity, love, and compassion centre in him as its proper seat, and flow from him as its true fountain. No one can know our Redeemer without beholding a " glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

And he yet lives ! " I know," says Job, " that my Redeemer liveth." He ever lives to bless his people and to carry forward the great work of their Redemption. He says, " I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell

and of death." Never, never shall those who trust in him want a Redeemer: in affliction, in death, in the grave, in the day of judgment, and through eternity. He says: "Because I live ye shall live also."

Will he receive those that go to him? Look at his history on earth. He is evermore the same; he rejected none who came to him on earth, and we have his own assurance, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." He not only receives all who come to him; but this is the only possible way by which we sinful creatures can have access to God, and knowledge and enjoyment of God.

Meditation on the Redeemer.

I am invited to "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world;" and so glorious is this object that all things, compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord, are utterly worthless. O help me by thine own Spirit, and give me right views of the spiritual beauty and glory of Christ, that in him I may see God in his beauty and perfection, in him may see my sinfulness, and in him my recovery, and thus may be filled with ardent love, deep humility, holy joy, and "be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light!"

3. THE EXTENT OF REDEMPTION.

The scriptures use more extended terms respecting redemption, as a propitiation, than they do respecting election, sanctification, and glorification. There is no limitation, as it respects man living in this world, to the expressions respecting the extent of redemption. The mercy and comfort of this to fallen sinners, situated as we are, is unspeakable. We are thus placed under a gracious system of restoration and recovery. There is nothing that need now deter any human being from the fullest confidence in the death of Jesus, as being a propitiation for his sins. It is the duty of every human being, if he would not make God a liar, (1 John v. 10.) to "believe the record that God gave

of his Son." And O how full and precious is that record! The Lord give to us simple faith, that our souls may be purified in obeying the truth!

The way in which the holy scriptures express this truth seems purposely varied to exclude all doubt, fear, and unbelief, and to leave every soul of man without excuse who does not believe God's word, and obtain peace and joy in believing. The terms most frequently used, where the objects of Christ's death are mentioned, are of the most large and general nature. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John i. 29.) "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John iv. 14.) "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. v. 19.) "He is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.) "ALL we like sheep are gone astray; the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us ALL." (Isa. liii. 6.) "One died for ALL." (2 Cor. v. 14.) "He gave himself a ransom for ALL." (1 Tim. ii. 6.) "That he by the grace of God should taste death for EVERY MAN." (1 Tim. iv. 10.) The wicked, who bring on themselves destruction, are described "as denying the Lord that bought them." The general strain of scripture is in this form; and the varied expressions must not be diluted and lowered to meet any preconceived system.

Never is it said, Christ died only for the elect, nor is there any phrase that can be so confined as to make such a sentiment revealed truth. Such expressions as, "Redeemed out of every kindred—redeemed from the earth"—apply to another part of redemption; its completion in glory. Such expressions also as, "I lay down my life for the sheep;" (John x. 15.) "the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood;" (Acts xx. 28.) "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it," (Ephes. v. 25.)—do not limit redemption to God's people, though they show a special design of love for them; but they are by no means to be so restricted as

if the church only had a concern in it. This would be, without any just foundation, to make one part of scripture to contradict plain and positive declarations in another. It would be in opposition to our Lord's word : " God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 17.) We must not add to God's word such expressions as the " elect" world, or the " Gentile " world. (Rev. xxii. 18.) That God is the " Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe," expresses that truth to which these passages of scripture lead us. This view furnishes a foundation of faith on which the soul of any sinner whatever may rest. It enables the minister without reserve to obey the divine direction : " Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature." It also leaves every unbeliever under the aggravated condemnation of rejecting redemption.

Our redemption, as it was completed on the cross, concerns the removal of sin, leaving us in a state of hope and under a day of grace ; this work was accomplished by the death of Christ. Jesus said on the cross, " It is finished." His death was " a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ; " not merely as it regarded some of the Gentiles in addition to the Jews, nor merely as it regarded the sufficiency of the price paid, but as it placed the fallen human race under a dispensation of grace and mercy, with the removal of every impediment to our full restoration to holiness and happiness, unless we wilfully reject so great salvation. Jesus dying for all men opens a spring of peace, holiness, and joy, to which the most vile and guilty may, by faith, have free access. The most polluted sinner, believing God's record, can now freely go to God as a loving father without one good thing in him to recommend him, and notwithstanding all his evil deeds. The barrier of sin is removed by the death of Jesus for all.

The Church of England most scripturally states the extent of redemption, in that beautiful explanation of the apostle's creed, which is in itself a little body of divine

truth. "1st. I learn to believe in God the Father, who made me and all the world." This is universal creation. "2nd. In God the Son, who redeemed me and all mankind." This is general redemption of the whole human race. "3rd. In God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God." This is distinguishing grace to the elect, making them meet for glory.

Archbishop Usher thus forcibly expresses the extent of Christ's redemption. "The Lamb of God, offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, intended, by giving satisfaction to God's justice, to make the nature of man which he assumed a fit subject for mercy, and to prepare a sovereign medicine that should not only be a sufficient cure for the sins of the whole world, but also should be laid open to all, and denied to none, that indeed do take the benefit thereof: for he is much deceived that thinks a preaching of a bare sufficiency is able to yield a sufficient ground of comfort to a distressed soul, without giving a farther way to it and opening a farther passage."

But may not this doctrine of Christ dying for all, open the flood-gates of licentiousness? If I believe that Christ atoned for my guilt, and that my sin is put away by his sacrifice, before I did anything to improve the blessing, may I not live as I please? No, it is impossible that you should believe it, and live so. You do not believe that Christ has put away your sins, if you can go on in sin against him. "Faith worketh by love." The redemption is effected in such a way as, if really believed, makes sin infinitely hateful, and God infinitely lovely, glorious, and delightful, even to a fallen sinner. Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, was given to humiliation, anguish, and bitter sorrows, to a painful and agonizing death, and all this was endured that our sins might be pardoned: really believe this, and his death becomes the death of sin, and a door is opened for love to God and man that nothing else can open. You have not faith if you have not love.

What remains then, Christians, but for us to receive the joyful truth; to believe God's own word that our Lord

Christ has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. O see here, sinner, the heart of God opened to thee, full of love, and removing the barrier between thee and him, so that no angel above may more freely go to thy God than thou, a poor wretched sinner, may now go by Christ Jesus. Thou honourest God by believing fully his word, and thus going to him as thy loving Father for all that thou wantest.

Meditation.

O joyful news! O good tidings! Christ died for all, and therefore for me, and has put away my sins. Lord, help me to believe thy word with undoubting faith, and to live in that blessed faith against all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Deliver me from unbelief—the evil heart of unbelief, which continually besets me, and enable me to venture all on thy faithful promises in Christ Jesus.

4. THE REJECTION OF REDEMPTION BY THE WICKED.

Though our Lord Christ died for all (2 Cor. v. 15), "and gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6), yet it is perfectly clear that all are not everlastingly saved by him. Multitudes, notwithstanding his redemption, perish with an aggravated ruin: "Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace."

The gospel is the richest and fullest display the world has ever seen, of the loving-kindness, tender compassion, and unspeakable grace of our God. Nor is there one impediment to man's receiving it; but that he loves sin rather than holiness: "This is the condemnation, that light has

come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." They cannot bear to see the extent of divine love, and the riches of divine grace, to us when enemies, because they must then see how hateful their hearts have been ; what an evil thing sin is, and they must loathe and abhor themselves, and henceforth aim in everything, with their whole souls, to live to God. They wish not for the Holy Spirit that Jesus bestows, for it would lead them from every sinful indulgence. The gospel takes away all excuse for a life of sin, and therefore the gospel, in its holy efficacy, is hateful to our natural heart, which, when left to itself, delights in the ways of sin.

But those that thus reject the gospel, " deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves quick destruction." God made a liar ! mercy abused ! the Son of God trampled upon ! pardon rejected ! sin chosen ! Satan preferred ! O sinner, sinner, stop and consider what art thou doing ? whither art thou rushing ? what art thou preparing for thyself ?

Say not, " I would believe, but I cannot ! " You reverse the truth. It is " I cannot believe, because I will not." There is a full provision of mercy made for you, and you have only to believe that God speaks the truth. O put away your own enmity and alienation of mind, and come to God in the name of Jesus, and ask for his Spirit, and that he will take away the evil heart of unbelief, and give you the gift of faith, and you shall receive a new and a believing heart. " Be reconciled to God." Redemption is a discriminating test, developing the wickedness of your heart. " Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness—but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God." If you reject the gospel, it is because, preferring sin and rebellion to holiness and obedience, you charge God with falsehood. You voluntarily choose the wages of sin, which is death, and reject the gift of God, which is eternal life. You set your own wisdom

above God, and perversely make that which he sets forth for your life the means of your everlasting death.

Say not it is the extent of your sin that keeps you from trusting in Christ! Indeed it is not so. That is merely the pretext by which your proud evil heart of unbelief allows you to continue peacefully in a state of rebellion. Under the gospel we are taught, that all manner of sin is put away by the death of Christ. The real truth is, you will not take God at his word. Who could be more deplorably sinful than Israel as described by Isaiah: "Rulers of Sodom, people of Gomorrah," and with this the hypocritical observance of every form of religion? Yet to them the invitation goes, "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." O my poor fellow-sinner rejecting redemption, I entreat thee, pause; there is salvation bought with blood for thee; free, complete, all-sufficient! What will be thy guilt if thou count thyself unworthy of eternal life, when God himself sets it before thee as a free gift?

Meditation.

Is it indeed so that I am insulting God, wronging my own soul, and rushing to eternal ruin, simply by my unbelief? O Lord, show me the true state of my soul! Thou hast said, O Jesus, that thy Spirit shall "convince the world of sin because they believe not on thee!" O teach me my true state! O lead me by thine own Spirit to thyself! May my God enable me to confide in all that he has said concerning his Son, that I may give him glory by believing his truth.

5. THE RECEPTION OF REDEMPTION BY THE BELIEVER.

Affecting are the words of St. John respecting the gen-

eral rejection of the Redeemer. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not;" but blessed be God, it is not universally thus: there were among them at the beginning those led to see the immense magnitude of embracing this salvation; they "beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth:" and through the power of the Holy Spirit, they cordially welcomed Christ as the only Saviour."

Believing in the name of Jesus is a real reception of redemption, and its true source is God's imparting to us divine power in the new birth (John i. 12). True faith is really believing all that God has testified respecting his Son (1 John v. 9, 10). God has in various ways from the beginning given testimony concerning Jesus. That chapter of Isaiah which most distinctly speaks of the unbelief of man (Isaiah liii. 1), most fully speaks of what Christ is, and what he has done. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed; the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Faith gives credit to God; believes that this is true, infallibly true, that God means what he says. In doing this, faith sees that God is so full of love to man, and of such tender compassion to lost sinners, that "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Faith also sees that sin is effectually removed from the sinner, and no longer charged to his account. "Christ was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." In doing this, faith really acknowledges the horrible nature of sin; that its tremendous malignity was such in the sight of God that he took this marvellous way to remove our transgressions, even the wounds, and bruises, and death of his only-begotten Son. Hence spring up hatred of sin, love to God, delight in him, walking with him, and the whole life of faith, hope and love.

This true reception of redemption and its effects does not come naturally, but in the way of God's wise and holy appointment; by means adapted, as all God's means are, in

infinite wisdom, for their designed end, and in means made effectual by his own imparted grace. There is "the exceeding greatness of his power" put forth "to us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." Such is our natural blindness and hardness of heart, so far are we "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us," that we should reject all this display of mercy, did not sovereign grace provide for this our great necessity, and make those, who are truly born of God, willing in the day of God's power: thus working "in them to will and to do of God's good pleasure," that they may "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling." Jesus has received the Holy Spirit for us as well as merited our justification.

Nor is it one act of faith, but a constant succession of acts all through a believer's life, which maintains his spiritual life; ever coming to Jesus for pardon and strength; ever going to God as our portion and joy by him; ever receiving out of his inexhaustible fulness those gifts of the Spirit which he has received for the rebellious; doing all things by Christ which strengtheneth us.

O blessed life! To be nothing, that Christ may be every thing; to be "translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son;" to live in the constant atmosphere of God's love; to delight ourselves in him; to have no barrier between God and our souls. O glorious light of life, to have the same mind with God, and his will our will, and his glory our glory, and a perfect oneness with all holy and happy beings even for ever. How sweetly the apostle speaks upon it: "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life: and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

Meditation.

From the scriptural ground of Christ giving himself a

ransom for all, what a view I get of the specialty and sovereignty of his grace in personal election. When I see a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, rebelling against him who bought him with his blood,—when I see such a one obtaining mercy by sovereign and distinguishing grace, then I see the riches of electing love. From this ground I get also the most awful views of the guilt of those who perish, seeing they deny him "who bought them with his blood," and "trample under foot the Son of God." From this ground I perceive the righteous character of the future judgment: it is a judgment of my conduct under a dispensation of the richest grace, being bought with the blood of the Son of God; hence my responsibility is most awful, and my sin of rejecting God's love most tremendous. From this ground I see the loving-kindness and the holiness of my God so united, that both are infinitely delightful to me a sinner: Christ has the Spirit for me, every barrier is removed, and I have the freest access in this day of grace now to him as my loving Father. Lord, "help my unbelief;" Lord, give me faith.

6. THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION.

Immense are the blessings of redemption.

1. Consider THE EVILS from which it delivers us. Without redemption we are under the curse of the broken law. All the benefits which God had conferred on man originally are forfeited and lost by our fall. The curse deprives us of them. The whole creation is subject to vanity, groaning and travailing in pain together, and every thing brings us misery. We are in bondage to Satan, who works in the children of disobedience, leading them captive at his will. We are alienated from God and at enmity with him by wicked works, and what situation can be more dreadful than for the creature to be hating that God on whom he depends for life, and breath, and all things. We are liable to afflictions, sorrows, pains, and sufferings from every part of God's creation. He has millions of weapons to punish

the rebellious. The fear and terror of wrath to come—the judgment-day—the last sentence—the devouring fire and everlasting burnings. O what horrible evils are these! to have body and soul cast into hell-fire, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!

It is only from the long-suffering of God, his goodness that would lead men to repentance, his forbearance and compassion, and his restraining power, that all these evils break not upon the ungodly, and send them not, in a moment, swiftly to everlasting destruction. The wrath to come is hanging over us; and it is infinitely aggravated to those refusing Christ, that it is "the wrath of the Lamb. In the great day of his wrath—who shall be able to stand!"

But Christ endured the evil which we had merited, obtained for us the good which we had forfeited, and thus has in himself eternal redemption and all spiritual blessings for our use. It pleased the Father that "in him should all fulness dwell;" as our head and Lord, he has all things for us. And IN HIM we have reconciliation, and all other fruits of redemption. But all has to be received by us from him through faith. "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Receiving Jesus, according to the testimony which God has given of him, is the turning-point of our salvation, and this faith is a divine gift, the work of the Holy Ghost, the effect of that new birth "which is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." If we receive it not, we are like the debtor owing 10,000 talents, whom his Lord first forgave, and then seeing he manifested an unforgiving spirit, cast him into prison for that cruelty, and brought upon him all the fault of his former debt, with the fearful aggravation of having abused his forgiving love.

The BENEFITS of redemption are very many and very great. We will notice reconciliation, forgiveness, justification, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life.

RECONCILIATION. The Messiah was predicted as one who was to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring

in everlasting righteousness. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." This "word of reconciliation," ministers have to preach, and the moment the death of Christ for our sins is truly believed, and we thus "receive the atonement" (Rom. v. 11) that moment the enmity of our carnal hearts against God and man is removed. Jesus "is our peace," bringing "us nigh to God by his blood," and "reconciling both" Jew and Gentile "unto God, in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." O precious result of redemption received! it takes away my hatred of him whose name is light and love, and brings me at once, a happy being, into the light of his countenance.

Forgiveness. This goes along with reconciliation. 2 Cor. v. 19. By suffering the penalty of the law, Christ removed that penalty from sinners. "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." It is forgiveness by "redemption through his blood," and therefore there was a real and most costly price paid for it; and our work is simply to believe God's word, and rejoice in God's love. O what good tidings for poor sinners are these! But we must discriminate here between forgiveness and the actual reception of forgiveness. Forgiveness is complete in Christ already for you; believe God's love to you, and it is truly received by you and becomes a sweet spring of love and holiness in your heart.

Adoption is also another fruit of redemption. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." This rich privilege is set before us in the gospel. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The voice of the gospel is, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." This rich privilege is enjoyed by us the moment we believe in Jesus.

"To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

JUSTIFICATION, or being acquitted and dealt with as righteous, was purchased by redemption. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." The ground of our acquittal from guilt is solely the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. His resurrection proved that his work was accepted, and now through him sinners stand free from guilt. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Ministers now go forth with the proclamation of the good tidings of great joy, that "now in this accepted time," now in the day of grace, there is justification for the ungodly, there is "a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." O for precious faith in God's word to realize the benefit which Christ has obtained for us! "Him has God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Righteousness is ready for us in Christ the Lord. Faith receives it and blesses God for it.

SANCTIFICATION flows from redemption through the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ our Lord "loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." So he is said again to "give himself that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus ii. 14.) It is only in redemption that a poor fallen sinner can gain real holiness, which is love, causing devotedness to God with the whole heart. But in redemption I see God all light, all love, all glory, all hatred of sin, and intensely loving the sinner; and thus by re-

demption I get to love God with ardent love from his having so first loved me, and I thus obtain all the fresh springs of holiness and entire devotedness. The Holy Ghost given by Christ, my Redeemer, in the use of God's means of grace, shews me these things, and makes me holy by them.

ETERNAL LIFE is the last gift which we will notice, as the crowning gift of God's loving-kindness in redemption. "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." Thus, you see, this precious gift, like all the rest, is in Christ for our use; a free gift of the rich grace of our loving Father. And what is life, eternal life? O how important to have clear views upon this point! It is not mere deliverance from danger and safety from evil—it is not mere animal happiness, or intellectual enjoyments. "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." To enter into the divine mind, character and glory; to see God as he is, infinitely lovely, and in the conviction of his excellencies from a full heart, to exclaim, "How great is his goodness and how great is his beauty!" By Christ to enter into that bright light in which God ever dwells, and in his light to see light; to behold his glory in the face of Jesus: this is eternal life begun here, and which will be perfected hereafter when we shall see him as he is, and know as we are known. God is the HAPPY ONE; to share in the same holy happiness, to partake of his bliss—this, and nothing less, is eternal life.

Meditation.

O INEXHAUSTIBLE, unfathomable, boundless love! "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" Blessed Saviour, let me constantly be looking to thee, and in thy face see more and more of this light of the knowledge of the glory of God, till I attain the same mind, and become wholly like thee!

7. THE COMPLETION OF REDEMPTION.

The purchase of redemption was completed on the cross. The beneficial effects of redemption will last through eternity. The scriptures shew us that Christians have now only the seal and earnest of that completed redemption which we shall have.

St. Paul tells the Ephesians, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory." Christians have a glorious inheritance, it is a sure possession, it was purchased by the blood of Jesus, and we are waiting for its complete enjoyment. We are in the situation of heirs, "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ;" and under the teaching of the Divine Spirit, are preparing for the possession of our future glory.

This was the hope of the church from the beginning. Job expresses it with that remarkable introduction, "O that my words were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" What is it he is thus anxious to record?—his hope in final redemption: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job xix. 24. Hosea brings a glorious promise of a similar kind: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction!" Hos. xiii. 14. Isaiah tells us, "He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." Isa. xxv. 8. And both these passages St. Paul applies to the future resurrection in that glowing description of the glory yet to come, to be given to the children of God, when they enter and inherit the kingdom of God. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible shall put on incorruption,

and this mortal shall put on immortality ; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written : Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Completed redemption in the kingdom of glory, is the happy end and issue of the trials, sorrows, burdens, and afflictions of the Christian, and the full reward for every thing that he may have given up in consequence of his now believing God's word, and acting upon it. For this glory he is waiting.

So the apostle describes the believer, now full of suffering and conflict, longing and hoping for that day. " We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies."

But it is not merely the Christian that shall be redeemed. The earth, and all that dwell upon it, after that purifying baptism of fire which is so clearly foretold (2 Peter iii.) shall also be renewed. " We, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Meditation.

Surely we should hasten the coming of the day of God. (2 Peter iii.) when all this dark, sorrowful, and evil scene shall pass away, and the new heavens and the new earth appear. O with what holy thirsting should we say, " Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

CHAPTER VI.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

1. The need of Intercession—2. The persons for whom it was made—3. The nature of Intercession—4. The office of High Priest—5. Christ our Mediator, Intercessor, and Advocate—6. Illustrations of Intercession—7. The use and comfort of this truth.

1. THE NEED OF INTERCESSION.

When any person has offended another by gross misconduct, his very person becomes so displeasing as to make a request by him unwelcome. If our whole course of conduct towards a benefactor of the utmost wisdom, kindness, and bounty, from whom we have received innumerable benefits, has been one of ingratitude and injuries, the sense of alienation, even in our own minds, makes it impossible for us to come with confidence of heart to such an injured benefactor and solicit favours from him. Those favours would at once be granted to a beloved object ; to a child, or to one dear to such a benefactor, and intimate with him. But the guilty offender justly fears that his very person, associated, as it must be, with his misconduct, will quite hinder the success of his petitions.

This, my friends, is our real situation ; yet we are far too blind to it. Prone we are, by nature, to make excuses for our misconduct, and to justify ourselves. Far are we from thinking that we need a Mediator.

But let us learn our true position. The law of God is holy, just, and good. It requires us to love our God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves. Obedience to it

would be universal happiness. Its reward and its penalty, just and righteons altogether, are, " The man that doeth these things shall live by them," and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." We have all daily, hourly, and times without number, broken this good and holy law. Why are we not cut off? How is it sinful man is spared by the holy God, and has been spared now for a period of nearly six thousand years ! " All have sinned and come short of the glory of God ; " how is it God for a season passes by and remits these sins ! It is all owing to " the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation throngh faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." This is the reason why a spared world of rebellious creatures is permitted to continue, notwithstanding the curse of the law, and the justice, and the truth, and the holiness of the great Jehovah. Here may we see clearly the need of Christ's intercession.

But it is not merely a suspense of judgment that we sinful creatures require. A day of salvation, a season for obtaining renewed grace, is also of nnspeakable moment, and the mediation of Jesus provides this. " He was made sin for us, who knew no sin , that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." We are, in virtue of this, exhorted, as in an " accepted time," in a " day of salvation," not to receive the grace of God in vain, but " to come out and be separate " from an evil world, and return to our heavenly Father, who will receive us, and " be a Father unto us, and we shall be dealt with as sons and daughters. In this retnrn to God, Christ is every thing. " No man cometh nnto the Father but by him ;" but, both Jew and Gentile, " throngh him, have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Here, again, we see the need of intercession to make snspended judgment a season of grace, and to open a way by which we may return to the holy Jehovah.

The many temptations which beset the children of God, and which they have not, through their still remaining

carnal nature, power in themselves to overcome, shew the necessity of continued intercession. We have trials within and without, domestic and public; temptations everywhere assault us, and a traitor within readily admits our worst foes. O the pride, impurity, selfishness, worldliness, that seek lodgment and entertainment in those hearts which ought to be filled with God and his holy law! The humbling, constant, and painful experience of this, compels the Christian to look for help; and delightful is the divine testimony, that Jesus knows our temptations, and prays for us. Luke xxii. 32.

Again, the just are not without sin. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But sin brings us afresh under the penalties of the broken law; "the wages of sin," at all times, "is death." Those who have obtained the righteousness which is by faith, still then need the Mediator every day. And most precious to them is the truth, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." All our services, too, are full of defects, and in themselves could not be accepted; but it is a blessed truth that they are now "acceptable to God by Christ Jesus." 1 Peter ii. 5.

But if our own necessities thus manifest the need of intercession, still more is it requisite when we bear in mind the judgment which is before us. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." How shall we stand in that judgment? Who can abide it? It is a fiery trial. "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." Have we believed the gospel? and are we bringing forth the fruits meet for repentance? What does conscience—what does the daily life testify? Who can satisfactorily answer these questions, in the day of the Lord, without a Mediator?

Then, again, consider there is an enemy, Satan, the devil, or calumniator and detractor of men, full of malice and full of subtlety, ready to avail himself of all the purity of the law, and the charges of conscience, and well acquainted with all our transgressions. He is "the god of this world," He is "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." He tempts men to sin, and knows when they concur with his temptations. His very title is, "The accuser of the brethren." And although he himself be full of wickedness, yet if his charge be just, "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" The charge must be met. We have a striking picture of the part which our Redeemer takes for us, in Zechariah iii. 1—5. "And he showed me Joshua the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at the right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" The ground of intercession here is traced to God's election, as it is in Romans viii. 33, 34. Nothing was there in Joshua and Jerusalem apart from this love of God. "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments." Thus Jesus sets us free from all the charges of Satan, and clothes us with the beautiful garments of salvation.

Prayer to see the need of Intercession.

Almighty Father! thou hast told me that the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them. O deliver me

from this blindness, and shine into my heart, to give me the light of the knowledge of thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ! I beseech thee, O thou God of all grace! in the name of Jesus Christ, shew me my sinfulness and weakness, and the all-sufficiency of that righteous Advocate, who is thy well-beloved Son, and who makes intercession for the transgressors. By him, who is the way, the truth and the life, by him alone I come unto thee. O hear me! and give me true faith in him, for his name's sake. Amen.

2. THE PERSONS FOR WHOM INTERCESSION IS MADE.

The persons for whom our Lord intercedes are transgressors. Very needful for our faith and comfort is it to keep this distinctly in view. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." His first coming is to save; his second coming to judge and reign. At his first coming, again and again, he testified that he came "to seek and to save that which was lost." It was foretold of him: "He bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

It is sin, our sin, that makes this intercession necessary. Had we not sinned we should have delighted to go to God as Adam did before the fall, and God could have blessed us, as he did Adam, with full dominion over everything on earth, and with every gift of his creation. By sin we forfeited these privileges, and by Christ's intercession for sinners a means of recovery is provided for us.

It is not because you are good, or better than others, that you may hope for Christ's intercession, but because you are sinful, and infinitely need it. See, in the parable of the barren fig-tree, a beautiful picture of our Saviour's interceding for the Jews, in the midst of their sins, and for all sinners. "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Be-

hold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none : cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it, and if it bear fruit, well ; and if not, then, after that, thou shalt cut it down." We have the same blessed truth, without any figure, as a glorious reality, amidst pains, sufferings, shame and ingratitude unparalleled, in the crucified Redeemer, hanging on the cross, between the two thieves, crying out for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It may seem, indeed, an objection to this view, that in his last intercessory prayer, speaking of those whom he had previously called "the men which thou gavest me out of the world," he says of them, "I pray for them ;" and then adds, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." Still, how full is the farther evidence of his love, a love in its result including the world, when, in a later part of the same prayer, desiring the full union of his elect people, both from among Jews and Gentiles ; and their full glory, in our Redeemer's glory, at his coming, he thus intercedes for all men : "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one ; that THE WORLD may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one as we are one. I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in me, and that THE WORLD may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me ; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." We have here a rich and comprehensive prayer. First, for the full blessedness of his elect, gathering now out of this evil world, that they may ever be with their Lord in glory ; and then a prayer for the world at large, the future blessedness of which is a result of the completion of his

elect in one body, according as we read, after that beautiful description of the Lamb's wife, the heavenly Jerusalem : "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour unto it." May we have grace now, then, to believe in his name, and obtain the full glory promised to his elect. O let not us, by unbelief, fall short of the promised rest, and come under the penalty of "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

The Saviour has no backwardness of heart to pray for any. Of the most wicked city of Jerusalem he says, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Let us go to Jesus, under the drawings of the Father's love, and in the very going to him we have evidence we are given to him : "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John vi. 37.) Let us put up our prayers in his name, and immediately his powerful intercession, like much incense, mingles with them and makes them effectual. (Rev. viii. 3.) How solemn is his asseveration, and let our faith realize it : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name ; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Meditation.

Think then, O my soul ! of this most blessed truth, that the Lord Jesus Christ intercedes for thee a sinner, when thou comest in his name to the Father ! What could my heart desire more adapted to my wants ? Who can be nearer to God than the only-begotten Son ? Who can be more my friend than he who died for me ? What petition can fail which is made powerful by being put into the hands of such an advocate ! O, let me most joyfully, and most gratefully always accept his mediation, use his name, and

with perfect confidence, notwithstanding my many sins, approach the most holy God through him.

3. THE NATURE OF OUR LORD'S INTERCESSION.

Ample and full is the provision which our God and Saviour has made in his word for the peace and holiness of his people. Unspeakably important is it for us to have a right and clear understanding of this provision to meet our daily wants, enable us to do all his will, and prepare us for our heavenly inheritance. May the Lord then enable me from his own word to make plain to the reader this peculiarly comforting doctrine !

Intercession means, to act between two parties as an equal friend to both ; and the intercession of our Lord Christ relates to his acting between us and God his Father, that God may be glorified, and we everlastingly saved and blessed.

Many things were requisite before this could be attained. The Lord Jesus, the only-begotten Son of the Father, had co-equal glory with the Father before the world was. (John xvii. 6.) He existed from the beginning with God, and was God. (John i. 1.) He was " in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (Phil. ii. 16.) But if so, how could he then be an intercessor for man, an equal friend to God and man ? O wondrous plan of divine love ! he emptied himself of his original glory, and " took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." He which sanctifieth us " became of one nature with us, " for which cause he is not ashamed to call us brethren. Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."

Taking our nature upon him, " he gave himself FOR US, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." He laid down his own life for us (1 John iii. 16), " bearing our sins in his own body on the tree." (1 Peter ii. 24.)

But it was necessary not only that reconciliation should thus be made for our sins, and a way provided by which the Holy God could look upon sinners without pouring his wrath upon them, it was farther necessary that we should have a living Mediator, partaker of the divine nature, that he might act on the part of God; and partaker of the human nature, that he might act on our part. The Lord Jesus, therefore, rose from the dead, ascended with our recovered nature to heaven, and there is seated at the right hand of God, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. O glorious and most consoling fact! Christ is "entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." And O what ample encouragement have we hence, in all our approaches to God! "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession; for we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Some particulars of his intercession are distinctly set before us in the Scriptures.

1. He presents his person, in our nature as his own, as a public head, mediator, and surety for us (Heb. ix. 12, 24; vii. 22), bearing our names on his breast. (Exod. xxviii. 29.)

2. He presents his merits as a full satisfaction for the debt of sin, and a full price for our redemption to glory. (1 John ii. 2; Eph. i. 14.) His blood speaks for us. (Heb. xii. 24.)

3. He makes known his desires and requests for our preservation from present evil (Luke xxii. 32), and our obtaining future glory. (John xviii. 24.)

4. He receives gifts for us, even rebellious as we are (Psalm lxviii. 18), and bestows those gifts upon us. (Acts v. 31.)

5. He presents our prayers, with much incense. (Rev. viii. 3 ; Exod. xxviii. 38.)

6. The Father himself delights to concur in this. He "heareth him always." (John xi. 42.) Christ is that "beloved Son in whom he is always well pleased." (Matt. xvii. 5.)

Meditation.

Oh that the door in heaven may be opened to me as it was to the apostle (Rev. iv. 1), and I by faith may behold in the midst of the throne that slain Lamb that takes away the sin of the world ! and in his intercession, while I see my deep sinfulness, may I see also the way clear and open to return with full confidence to the High and Holy God, as my most merciful Father, and my own God.

4. THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH PRIEST.

Great is the kindness and condescension of God in teaching us heavenly things, by giving, to Moses on the Mount, patterns of them to form part of the law, and thus to be a daily instructor in the invisible realities of the heavenly world. Our backwardness to receive this instruction may teach us our great dulness of apprehension as to spiritual things. In speaking of our Lord as a high priest after the order of Melchizedec, the apostle adds, "of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be understood, seeing ye are dull of hearing." May the Lord himself open our ears to hear, and enlighten our eyes to see.

Among the patterns of the heavenly things was that most lively type of our Lord Christ—the office of the high priest. Let us "consider," then, as we are bid to do, "the apostle and high-priest of our profession, Jesus Christ."

One of the twelve tribes of Israel, that of Levi, was dedicated to the service of God. From the descendants of Aaron, in that tribe, the ordinary priests were chosen. The high priest was placed over all the other priests, by the direct appointment of God himself. Aaron was first

appointed to this office; being washed, clothed with holy garments, and anointed with precious oil. He had a peculiar breastplate, with twelve precious stones, each stone bearing the name of one of the twelve tribes, and wore on his mitre a plate of pure gold, with the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." He was clothed in this splendid dress whenever he was engaged in the Tabernacle or Temple service. He was to be free from all blemish; and once a-year he entered alone into the Holy of Holies, with the blood of the bullock, to sprinkle on the mercy-seat. The whole of his services, as set before us in Exod. xxviii. and xxix., and Lev. vii., ix., xvi., and xxi., must be read, and compared with the Epistle to the Hebrews to give you an adequate view of the varied ways in which this sacred office illustrates that gracious work, by which our Redeemer is now carrying on intercession for us. He is appointed to this office immediately by God himself. (Heb. vi. 4—6.) He is the elder brother of God's spiritual family of priests. Without measure is his anointing, and the gift of the Spirit to him. He first offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, and then "entered into heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us." How glorious and beautiful are his robes of righteousness! how perfect his holiness! On his head are many crowns, and by him have we access to and communion with God. "Good things yet to come" are assured to us through him. Now he is within the veil, pleading our cause, but "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." When he returns, like the High Priest, he will return to bless us, and put God's name upon us. In a fuller sense than has ever yet been realized, he will say to his people: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift his countenance upon thee and give thee peace."

Realize, then, Christian reader, these great truths: the atonement for sin is finished; the High Priest is gone up into the Holy of Holies, even to God himself, and has been accepted. He is before the throne. He is engaged in in-

tercession on our behalf. He has received gifts for the rebellious. Believe all this grace provided for you, and seek for mercy and salvation through him. How impressively the apostle addresses us; "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering."

Hymn on the Office of the High Priest.

See Aaron, God's appointed priest,
Within the veil appear,
In robes of sacred meaning drest,
Presenting Israel's prayer.

With the atoning blood he stands
Before the mercy-seat;
And clouds of incense from his hands
Arise with odour sweet.

Through him the eye of faith descries
A greater priest than he;
Thus Jesus pleads above the skies,
For sinners such as we.

He bears the names of all his saints
Deep on his heart engrav'd;
Attentive to the state and wants
Of all his love has sav'd.

In him a holiness complete,
Light and perfection shine:
And wisdom, grace, and glory meet;
A Saviour all divine.

The blood, which as a priest he bears
For sinners, is his own;
The incense of his prayers and tears
Perfumes the holy throne.

In him my weary soul has rest,
Though I am weak and vile;
I read my name upon his breast,
And see my Father's smile.

5. CHRIST OUR MEDIATOR, INTERCESSOR, AND ADVOCATE.

All the titles of our Redeemer have relation more or less to his intercession: but we will select Mediator, Intercessor, and Advocate, as, with that of High Priest, specially applicable to this subject.

He is our MEDIATOR: the one who goes between God and man. The very appointment testifies the sweet truth, that "God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, for there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." It is a blessed state when it can be said of us, "We are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant,—one who, as the Son of God, can approach God for us, and as the Son of Man can feel and sympathize with us. A Mediator is not needed when all is at unity; he comes between contending parties for reconcilation. When the contention was wholly owing to man's sin, and was between the great God and weak man, how utterly helpless our state without a Mediator! But, blessed be God, that he, in his infinite love, has provided a "daysman betwixt us," one that can plead for us, "and lay his hand on us both." (Job ix. 33.) At Mount Sinai, (Exod. xx. 18—21,) the law "was ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator." Let us go to Jesus, our Mediator, and commit all our spiritual interests with perfect confidence, to him who is now in the heavenly mount with God for us. He is the only being in heaven, he is the only one on earth, who can act for us with God, so as really to bless us.

He is our INTERCESSOR: an intercessor is one who stands up in behalf of another to obtain blessings for him. We have set before us the awful state of the world without this, in Isa. lix. 1—15; and it is closed thus: "Truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey; and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment." What could we next have expected but exterminating judgments? No: this is not the mind of

our God ; in judgment he remembers mercy. The prophet goes on : " And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor ; therefore his arm brought salvation, and his righteousness it sustained him." Judgments come, indeed, on his obstinate and irreclaimable enemies, but his intercession obtains effectual salvation and deliverance for his people, and, in the result, the universal " fear of the name of the Lord, (v. 7—19). The office of intercession was undertaken by Christ, in its fulness, on his resurrection ; and now " who is he that condemneth ?" Shall " Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us ?" How glorious that view of the apostle ! " I beheld, and lo in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain !" and how delightful the songs made to this Lamb ! "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation." What an effectual plea for us ! what an abiding and constant intercession is thus presented by the slain Lamb in the midst of the heavenly places ! O let us realise it in all our approaches to God !

He is our ADVOCATE. When a cause is to be tried, the person accused, from ignorance or want of ability, is generally unable to plead for himself, and is glad to employ an advocate to plead for him. The gracious Redeemer has been pleased thus to set forth his own work for us. We have, indeed, in ourselves, a cause wholly desperate. Our very plea is, that we are guilty, but this " wonderful counsellor," out of that very plea, as St. John shews (1 John ii. 1, 2,) can gather, from God's gracious promises (1 John i. 9,) and his own propitiation for our sins, the very argument for our being forgiven, and cleansed from all unrighteousness. True it is we have a most bitter, malignant, and skilful accuser ; true it is that the holy and good law is clearly against us as transgressors ; true it is the Judge is altogether righteous ; true it is that our mouths are stopped, and we are guilty before God, and are compelled to say,

" Behold I am vile : and yet out of all these unpromising and most desperate circumstances, there is an effectual and prevailing plea for our justification, even " the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood : " a plea in which we become interested, when we have really gone to the Advocate and put our cause into his hands, for this is the proof that we are given to Christ, and shall behold his glory. (John vi. 37 ; xvii. 24.)

Bishop Reynolds's Meditation on the Intercession of Christ.

" He is our Advocate and Mediator ; he is the only Practiser in the Court of Heaven, and therefore he must needs be full of the business of his church. It is his office to despatch the affairs of those that come unto him, and crave his favour and intercession, to debate their causes ; and he is both faithful and merciful in his place, and besides, furnished with such unmeasurable unction of the Spirit, and vast abilities to transact all the businesses of his church, that whosoever cometh unto him for his counsel and intercession, he will in no wise cast them out, or refuse their cause. And this is one great assurance we may take comfort in, that, be our matters ever so foul and inexcusable in themselves, yet the very entertaining of him as our counsel, and the leaning upon his wisdom, power, fidelity, and mercy, to expedite our business, to compassionate our estate, and to rescue us from our demerits, does, as it were, alter the property of the cause, and produce a clean contrary issue to that which the evidence of the thing in trial, would of itself have created. And, as we may observe that men of extraordinary abilities in the law delight to wrestle with some difficult business, and to shew their learning in clearing matters of the greatest intricacy and perplexity before, so does Christ esteem himself most honoured, and the virtue and wisdom of his cross magnified, when, in cases of sorest extremity, of most hideous guilt, of most black and uncomfortable darkness of soul, which pose not only the presumptions, but the hope, faith, conjectures

thoughts, and contrivances which the hearts of men can even in wishes make to themselves for mercy, they do trust him "whose thoughts are infinitely above their thoughts." (Isaiah lv. 8 ; l. 10.) When the soul can go unto Christ with such complaints and acknowledgments as these: "Lord, when I examine my cause by mine own conscience and judgment of it, I cannot but give it over as utterly desperate and beyond cure ; my bones are dried, my hope is cut off, I am utterly lost ; my sins and my sorrows are so heavy, that they have broken my spirit all to pieces, and "there is no sound part in me." But, Lord, I believe thou knowest a way to make dead bones live ; (Ezek. xxxvii. 3.) that thy thoughts and ways are above mine, and that thou knowest thine own thoughts of peace and mercy though I cannot comprehend them ; that thy riches are unsearchable ; that thy love is above human knowledge ; that thy peace passes all created understanding ; that though I am the greatest of all sinners, and feel enough in myself to sink me as low as Judas into hell, yet thou hast not left me without patterns of all suffering, of thy royal power in enduring, and in forgiving sins. And now, Lord, though thou afford me no light, though thou beset me with terrors, though thou make me to possess the sins of my youth, yet I will desire to fear thy name, to walk in thy way, and to wait upon thy counsel. I know there is not, in men or angels, so much wisdom, compassion, or fidelity as in thee ; and, therefore, if I must perish, I will perish at thy feet, I will starve under thy table, I will be turned away and rejected by thee, who hast promised to cast away none that come unto thee. I have tried all ways, and here I resolve to rest and to look no further ; thou that hast kept such a sinner as I am out of hell thus long, canst by the same power keep me out for ever. Upon thy wisdom and compassion, who canst make dried bones to flourish like an herb, (Isa. lxvi. 14.) and broken bones to rejoice and sing, I cast the whole weight of my guilty spirit. Into thy bosom I empty all the fears, cares, and requests of my distracted and sinking soul."

"Where a man can thus pour out himself unto Christ, he esteems the price and power of his blood most highly honoured: when men believe in him against reason, and above hope, and beyond the experience, or the apprehensions they have of mercy; for Christ loves to shew the greatness of his skill in the salvation of a Manasseh, a Mary Magdalen, a crucified thief, a persecutor and injurious blasphemer, and in giving life to them that nailed him to his cross; the more desperate the disease, the more honourable the cure."

6. ILLUSTRATIONS OF INTERCESSION.

The history of the Bible is full of facts which illustrate intercession in general, and are striking types of our Redeemer's intercession in particular. Such are the sacrifices of the patriarchs before and after the flood, and those of the law of Moses in general. Let us take some more prominent examples. The first act of Noah, on his deliverance from the deluge,—that most striking evidence that God will awfully visit general guilt with general judgment—was an act of sacrifice and intercession. And in consequence of that, the Lord has ever since preserved the earth from destruction by another flood. The Lord "smelled a sweet savour," and said, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

The history of Abraham's intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah shews the willingness of God, our Father, to be pleaded with for the worst of sinners, and also the character of that intercession which Jesus is making above for sinners exposed to the divine wrath. Read Gen. xviii. 20—33.

Jacob's wrestling with the angel for his family, is another figure of our Lord's fervent and prevailing prayer for his family. (Gen. xxxii. 24—32.) "He had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto him, he found him in Bethel, and there he spake

with us ; even the Lord God of hosts, the Lord is his memorial." (Hosea xii. 3—5.) We may see the same truth in Joseph's interceding with Pharaoh for his family, and obtaining thus for them a settlement in the land of Egypt. (Gen. xlvii. 1—10.)

Moses's whole history, his appearing before Pharaoh for Israel, and then his appearing before God for them in Mount Sinai, and his pleading in their behalf after their rebellions, are lively examples of the intercession of Christ. With what self-sacrifice, and earnestness, and powerful arguments, does he plead for them ! When God says, adapting his expressions to our weakness in resisting importunity, " Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation ; " Moses will not accept a personal benefit at the cost of his people, but beseeches the Lord with many touching pleas in their behalf to spare them, till he succeeds. Read Exod. xxxii.

Aaron also, on more occasions than one, was made a striking pattern of the intercession of Christ. When a plague was sent among the congregation on account of their murmuring, and God threatened to consume them in a moment, Aaron " took the censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed." (Numb. xvi. 46—48.)

Intercession is farther illustrated by the history of Job. In the opening of the book of Job, his prayers and sacrifices for his family are mentioned, " for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned." In the close also, of the book, we find his friends were directed to go and offer up burnt-offerings, and Job was " to pray for them, for God would accept him." It is also added, " the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends."

The history of Daniel is full of the spirit of prayer. The earnestness with which (in chap. ix.) he pleads for his people, and the many affecting motives urged, show us

something of the greater earnestness with which our living High Priest is ever interceding for us.

But in every thing Jesus has the pre-eminence. When wearied with the labour of an arduous day, he retired not for repose, but "went apart up into the mountain alone to pray." When on the very eve of his own apprehension and crucifixion, he poured out that most sublime and tender prayer for his apostles and the world, recorded John xvii. When hanging on the cross, he still prayed for his murderers. And now he reigns above, we are assured, this is the office which he is still carrying on;—"he ever liveth to make intercession for us." How full of comfort should be to us that picture of his intercession which we have in the account given in Rev. viii. 3, 4!

Meditation.

Oh that, by every stream of grace and mercy, I may rise up to the Original Fountain, and by all see the overflowing fulness of Jesus, my living and ever-interceding Prophet and High Priest! May I search the Scriptures, which so fully testify of him, and constantly come to him, weak, sinful, and empty as I am, to receive out of his fulness grace for the supply of all my wants! "Whatsoever I do in word or deed, may I do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

7. THE USE AND COMFORT OF THIS TRUTH.

The Israelites valued not the intercession of Moses till they were brought under the terrors and threatenings of Mount Sinai. And to some readers all the truths now declared may seem a matter of great indifference. Could they see their real condition, and realize their sinful departure from God, the fearful guilt that lies upon them, the threatenings of the Most High, and the terrors of that everlasting destruction to which they are hastening "who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," they might learn the infinite value of Christ's intercession.

Let the bare fact itself, then, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High, "ever liveth to make intercession for us," speak with irresistible power to their conscience. Why is it, O sinner! that such an intercession is needed? Why is your being spared from instant destruction dependant on such a remarkable truth? Oh learn that there is an evil in sin of which you have yet no conception; learn your utter insufficiency and inability to recover yourselves. The day of grace is yet continued, but it is a limited period, quickly passing away. Learn, too, that it is rash presumption for a sinner to approach God, except in the name of Jesus! Can you more mock or insult the divine wisdom, majesty, and goodness, than by slighting his provided way of salvation? Let Roman Catholics tremble for their awful guilt in saint-worship, and earthly mediators! Let self-righteous men, who think by their own tears, prayers, alms, and works, to turn away the wrath of God, learn how vain is such a ground of confidence, and what contempt, while resting on these, they pour on "the only name given unto men whereby we must be saved!"

But are any burdened by sin, broken-hearted under lengthened and apparently unavailing struggles with their corruptions? Do the terrors of the Lord overwhelm them? Does the law of God manifestly, and in every thing condemn them? Does Satan bring many a heavy charge against them, and conscience say, It is all true! I am guilty, verily guilty before God, shut up under sin! For them this doctrine is revealed as a precious balm to their wounded spirit. You have a mediator. You have an Intercessor, an Advocate, a High Priest. He is living, he is at God's right hand; he is pleading for you. "Look unto him and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

CHRISTIANS, remember THE INTERCESSION OF JESUS IN ALL YOUR PRAYERS. Think of this before you pray. Thus may you gather holy boldness in approaching the throne of God. It is a blessed thing to have access with confidence to the great God as having reconciled us to himself

by Jesus Christ, and no longer imputing our trespasses to us. This we gain by Jesus' intercession. In prayer, too, intermingle, as it were, with all your devotions, the fragrant name of Jesus. "By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually." The recollection and realising by faith of such a Mediator, will give life and power to prayer. And, after prayer, still let us leave all to him; not resting on their fervency, if fervent; nor being in despair for their coldness, if cold; but resting and hoping in the mighty intercession of him who is the elect in whom the Father delighteth; the "beloved Son in whom he is always well pleased."

And, Christians, IMITATE THE REDEEMER also in intercession. He has washed us in his blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father. It is our office to be "the Lord's remembrancers." It is an exhortation given us, as a primary duty, to "make supplications, prayers, and intercessions, and giving thanks for all men; for kings and all that are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." Oh that his holy pattern and lovely example may stir up every Christian, to seek to be like him in interceding for a world perishing in sin, and in enlarged supplications for all the family of God!

Thanks for Christ's Intercession.

All praise, all glory be thee, O heavenly Father, who hast not left me to perish in my sins, but hast in thy infinite mercy and tender compassion, provided a full ransom for them all, and a merciful and faithful High Priest, to appear in thy presence for me! Oh how can I thank thee as I ought for this unspeakable gift of thy love! Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King! Praise God in his sanctuary. Praise him in the firmament of his power. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1. Unity of the Godhead—2. Distinctness of the Spirit—3, Names of the Spirit—4. Jesus receiving the Holy Spirit for us—5. His office in Redemption—6. His love in undertaking it—7. Our duty to the Spirit—8. The enlarged outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

1. THE UNITY OF THE GODHEAD.

THE glories of the great God are beyond the limited comprehension of the wisest and best of men, or the most exalted of angels. None, by all their searching can perfectly know Jehovah ; but every increase of holy knowledge of God, is an increase of blessedness, and part of the very happiness of everlasting life.

The oneness of the true and ever-glorious Jehovah is frequently and plainly stated in the Bible. " The Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, there is none else." (Deut. iv. 39.) " Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. vi. 4.) He asks, " Is there a God beside me ? Yea, there is no God." (Isaiah xliv. 8.) " An idol is nothing in the world, and there is none other God but one." (1 Cor. viii. 4.)

The full nature of this oneness we cannot comprehend. It is a perfect unity in all attributes of wisdom, love, power, and riches, and in holiness and righteousness, beyond our largest thoughts. It is the same mighty and merciful mind, the same gracious and holy Being, everywhere present, controlling, directing, sustaining, filling,

and governing all things according to his own will and grace, truth, and love, with a vastness and greatness that no created being can fully comprehend or realize. But it is the true happiness of every created being to know the great God, to confide wholly in him, to see him through all his works, and, by every display which he has made of himself, to rise to communion with him, and evermore to rejoice in him.

In this unity of the Godhead, the Bible has revealed a Trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; each uncreated, incomprehensible, almighty, and equally God, and "yet they are not three Gods, but one God," and we are baptized, not in many names, but "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The full nature of this Trinity in unity also is far beyond our highest thoughts. The practical use of the doctrine is, however, manifest in every place where it is revealed in the word of God. It furnishes, in the mode of its revelation to us in the Scriptures, constant lessons of instruction, humiliation, confidence, holiness, comfort, and happiness, so that "to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent," is "eternal life; to acquaint ourselves with God" is "to be at peace with him." And as there is a perfect unity of nature in the three persons of the Godhead, so God in his love has designed that those whom he has given to his Son, and who believe in him, should be brought to a perfect unity of mind and heart with each other and with him. The Saviour's prayer is, "That they all may be one. As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:" and for this very end, "that the world may believe" the divine mission of Christ; so full of holy love is God to all his creatures, and while altogether righteous, yet full also of compassion in all his ways, even to those who have sinned against him.

Meditation.

May the last intercessions of the Redeemer be fulfilled in me! May I believe in Jesus, and attain that blessed

oneness with the Father and Son for which he has prayed, and which he has connected with the final blessedness of the whole world! O how delightful ought it to be to me, that I have but one to please; and that one full of light and love, grace and glory, altogether excellent, and who has said, If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.

2. THE DISTINCTNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

In considering the glories of the Divine Being, it is necessary not to "confound the persons," or so to mingle them as that their several and distinct offices cannot be discerned. The Holy Scriptures make this very clear, by shewing that each Person has, in infinite love, undertaken a distinct work and office in our salvation, and by very frequently mentioning all three together in a distinct form. Thus the Lord Jesus bids his ministers: "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The way in which Christians are to build themselves up on their "most holy faith," is, "praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life."

Our Lord, in his last discourse before his crucifixion, very frequently brings before us the three in one, both in their distinctness and their unity. We read in John xiv. 16, 17. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth." So again, ver. 26: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." So again, xv. 26, and xvi. 7: The Spirit is seen acting as a distinct person again and again. Thus "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." (Acts xiii. 2.) And this was not merely a special occasion, but we are assured the ordinary min-

isters of the church are appointed by him, from the charge, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers." All spiritual gifts are indeed imparted by him. (1 Cor. xii. 1—12.) He especially distinctly inspires the sacred writers, speaking expressly to them (1 Tim. iv. 1), and moving them to write the word of God for our use.

The distinctness of the Holy Ghost may be seen in the INFINITE WISDOM ascribed to him. "The Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God; for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.) Well may he be called "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and the Spirit of counsel" (Isaiah xi. 3), who thus searches and understands the unfathomable depths of the Godhead.

The same distinctness may be seen in the PERSONAL WILL ascribed to him in dispensing his gifts. While there are "diversities of gifts, it is the same Spirit—all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Cor. xii. 11.) In these words we have a very full and plain statement of a distinct and personal being, acting voluntarily and freely, and one who has perfect power over the most precious gifts man can receive, and who distributes them just as he pleases, in full sovereignty of wisdom and love.

We may again see this distinctness in the ALMIGHTY POWER which belongs to him. Thus the Virgin Mary was told: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.) So the Holy Ghost is called "the Spirit of might" (Isaiah xi. 3), and Christians are "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man." (Ephes. iii. 16.)

We may yet further see this distinctness and divine glory of the Holy Ghost from HIS DWELLING IN EACH BELIEVER, whose body is his temple. On this the apostle

speaks very explicitly : " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy ; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.) " Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own." (1 Cor. vi. 19.) How clearly he must be God who is thus everywhere present with his people, and has temples for his worship over the whole earth, and leads them as the sons of God to the promised glory !

Thus may we see that the Holy Ghost is a distinct, divine person, to be adored, confided in, loved, and obeyed. Nor can this be more plainly and beautifully expressed than in the words of the Athanasian creed : " He is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding ; so there is one Father, not three Fathers, one Son, not three Sons, one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts."

Meditation.

Oh unfathomable depth of the Divine glory ! " Who by searching can find out God to perfection ? " But all that he has revealed of himself shews his extended wonders of love and glory towards sinful men. How can I duly magnify the divine glory of that Spirit who is everywhere present, and makes the human body of a sinful creature trusting in Jesus, the temple of his choice, and the abode in which he imparts his grace !

3. THE NAMES OF THE SPIRIT.

It has pleased the Divine Spirit to reveal himself to us in the scriptures under varied names, and each of these helps us to a fuller understanding of his being and glories.

The most common name by which he is distinguished is HOLY GHOST or HOLY SPIRIT. The word Spirit, which also denotes wind or air in motion, shews us that the air and its actings in the natural world represents to us the

Holy Spirit and his workings in the spiritual world. (John iii. 8.) The air is universally diffused, invisible, mighty in operation, absolutely necessary to life, and distinct from all bodies. So also is the Holy Ghost. He is everywhere present, unseen, almighty, the giver of life to the soul, distinct in nature from every creature, and distinct in person from the Father and the Son, from whom he proceeds. He is holy as separated from all evil, and far higher than all created spirits, and the communicator of holiness to us. Being a pure Spirit, he has access to our spirits, sweetly changes our will, setting before us spiritual motives, awakening us to a sense of our spiritual danger, alarming our fears, giving, and enlivening, and enlarging faith, hope, and love, and so dwelling as a suggesting, governing, sanctifying, almighty and sovereign Ruler in his own temple the human body, and working in us all "the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God."

He is the COMFORTER; the word thus rendered means one called in to assist another in distress, and includes the ideas of Advocate, Intercessor, Guide, and Instructor. It comprehends all that assistance which the Holy Spirit affords to us in our weak, sinful, and helpless condition; supplying the absence of our Divine Redeemer, and helping all our infirmities. It is the privilege of the people of God to walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. (Acts ix. 31.) He is promised by our Lord as "another Comforter (1 John xiv. 16.) in addition to himself, and therefore distinct from him. And his gracious work imparts the most needful help, the most efficient strength, the most satisfying comfort that the immortal spirit of man can obtain here below. When all other comfort fails, when deep distress and agony overwhelm the soul, the Christian has found that the Holy Spirit can give "the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Bishop Reynolds thus distinguishes between the intercession of our Lord Christ and that of the Spirit: "Christ

is our advocate at the tribunal of God's justice, to plead our cause against the severity of his law, and the most righteous and undeniable charge of sin which he lays upon us ; the Holy Spirit is our advocate at the tribunal of God's mercy, enabling us there to clear ourselves against temptations and murderous assaults of our spiritual enemies. The world accuses us by false and slanderous calumniations, laying to our charge things which we never did : the Spirit in this case makes us not only to plead our innocency, but to rejoice in our fellowship with the prophets which were before us, to esteem the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world ; to count ourselves happy in this, that it is not such low marks as we are, which the malice of the world aims at, but the Spirit of glory and of God which rests upon us, who is on their part evil spoken of. Satan, that grand accuser of the brethren, does not only load my sins upon my conscience, but further endeavours to exclude me from the benefit of Christ, by charging me with impenitence and unbelief : but here the Spirit enables me to clear myself against the father of lies."

He is called the ETERNAL SPIRIT (Heb. ix. 14), as being truly and properly God, existing from eternity, and inhabiting eternity. Isaiah asks, respecting the creation of our world : " Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him ? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding ?" (Isaiah xl. 13, 14.) Precious is this title of the Divine Spirit, assuring us of eternal salvation, which, like its great Author, shall never fail, but be maintained amidst all the temptations and trials of this evil world, and secured against decay through eternity. God has " loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." May we cease from self, and cease from man, and depend only on this Eternal Spirit.

The SPIRIT OF TRUTH is another title of the Holy Ghost ;

our Lord thus testifying : "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now ; howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 12, 13.) Truth, in its fullest sense, belongs only to the unchangeable God, from whom all things proceed ; man walketh in a vain shadow, deceived by false appearances : but God dwells in light, and beholding in that light both himself and all the creatures whom he has made, his word pronounces on them according to their true nature ; he is too wise to err, too good to deceive, a God of truth ; so also our Lord says to his disciples, "I am the truth." And as this is a title of divine glory given to the Father, and the Son, so St. John says, "the Spirit is truth."

Truth is the firm, immutable reality of things, as ordained by him who is emphatically "the God of truth." (Deut. xxxii. 4.) In the view of this name of the Spirit, how sweet are the promises of his teaching : "the Holy Ghost shall teach you all things." (John xiv. 26.) Exposed as we are to error on every side, how infinitely merciful is God to provide for our guidance the Spirit of truth himself to be our teacher, so that a Christian may say, "the truth dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." Every Christian is one "purifying his soul in obeying the truth through the Spirit ;" God himself imparting his Spirit to us for this great end.

The SPIRIT OF LIFE is another name of the Holy Ghost. Thus the apostle says, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Natural (Gen. vii. 22), spiritual (Rom. viii. John iii. v), and everlasting life (Gal. vi. 2,) come through his gift. As no living being can exist without air, so there can be no spiritual existence without the Spirit of God. Christians are born of the Spirit (Gal. v. 25), and are quickened by the Spirit. (Rom. viii. 11). All the graces that manifest a living soul are the fruit of the Spirit. There, then, must we apply for fresh supplies to strengthen and animate anew the spiritual life, to revive us when drooping, and sustain us when fainting.

Many other names of the Divine Spirit might be added. He is called "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah xi. 2), "the good Spirit" (Psalm cxliii. 10), "the free Spirit" (Psalm li. 12), "the Spirit of judgment and burning" (Isa. iv. 4), "the seven Spirits which are before the throne" (Rev. i. 5), "the Spirit of grace" (Zech. xi. 10. Heb. x. 29), "the Spirit of promise," (Eph. i. 13); but we cannot enlarge. Let the reader search the sacred volume.

To these may be joined those figures by which he is represented, such as "water" (John vii. 39), "a mighty wind" (Acts ii. 2), "fire" (Matt. iii. 11), "oil" (Heb. i. 9), and the like.

Meditation.

What fulness of grace, and love, and comfort do these names display! How graciously has the Lord of all condescended to meet my infirmities, and provided a supply for all my wants. May I credit his love, apply for his promised aid, be made meet for his kingdom, and inherit his glory!

4. JESUS RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR US.

How can the divine Spirit dwell with sinful man? It is the testimony of God: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any person defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy;" but we are continually, by unholy thoughts, defiling his temple. And yet we infinitely need the Spirit of God, and if we have it not we shall perish in the day of his wrath. Provision is made for this our great necessity in our Head and Lord, whose very name is Messiah, Christ, the anointed One, in reference to the Holy Ghost which he has received for us. He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and through him from the beginning the divine Spirit was given to men. But when he had atoned for the guilt of all men by his death, and obeyed

the law for us and ascended on high, he received the Holy Ghost in larger and fuller measure (John vii. 39), as a gift for his rebellious brethren, that "the Lord God might dwell among them." We, believing God's love in him, receive those gifts through faith. Righteous in him, we receive from him his own Spirit, so that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." The type of Aaron anointed with holy oil (Exod. xxx. 25—30), is a beautiful representation of the spiritual unction which our Redeemer receives for all the members of his body. We, the members of his body, have a oneness with him, so that all the gifts bestowed on him descend on us; David speaks of this unity: "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down to the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments."

The Spirit was given without measure to our Lord, and so he was "full of grace and truth," and all this was as Son of man, in our nature, as our Head and for our use. Let us realize, then, our standing in Jesus. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." There is an inexhaustible fulness provided in Christ for our use: Faith receives it, rejoices in it, and is filled with love to God. "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." How precious then is faith in the divine testimony! What a root of spiritual life and blessedness here, and what a door of entrance to all the glories promised hereafter!

Meditation.

Oh what amazing mysteries of wisdom and love are hid in Christ Jesus for sinful and rebellious man! What a day of grace is that in which I now live, and what need I have to take heed that I receive not all this grace in vain, losing by unbelief those rich treasures which God has stored up in Jesus for me, and incurring the awful guilt of neglecting so great salvation!

5. THE OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT IN REDEMPTION.

The great office of the Spirit of God is to impart spiritual life to the soul, and maintain and carry it unto perfection. "Except a man be born again (or from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) This is not, as our Lord shewed Nicodemus, a natural, but a spiritual new birth. He said to him, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind blows, (or as it might be rendered, the Spirit breathes,) where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We want spiritual life, before we can produce or even understand spiritual actions, and the Holy Spirit alone can produce this life in us. It is his gracious office, in giving us this life, to "shed abroad the love of God in our hearts," to "take of the things of Christ and shew them to us." (Rom. v. 5. John xvi. 14, 15.) We thus see how greatly we have wronged our God by hard thoughts and alienation of mind. We thus see that God does really love us, though sinful, and has put away all our sins by the sacrifice of Christ. We see that he has given opportunity and space for repentance and recovery of our lost happiness, and that we may yet, through faith in his word, be restored to happiness, the enjoyment of his favour and love, the highest privilege of the creature, confidence and delight in the Lord of all. These are the good tidings which the gospel brings to all men, and which the Holy Ghost applies with power to the heart of the believer. God has most plainly revealed his love to all the world by the gift of his only-begotten Son, Christ Jesus (John iii. 16), and has thus given the strongest of all possible proofs of his hatred of sin, and his amazing, but righteous love to every human being. (Rom. viii. 32.) These things we are to believe, on the divine testimony, which is God's means and ordinance for giving the Spirit (Gal. iii. 2), and for producing faith in our hearts (Rom. x. 17. James i. 18), and

which testimony none can reject but from wilful unbelief and love of sin. On believing God's truth, as made known to us in his word, and then in the name of Jesus, asking for and seeking his great gift (John iv. 10), we obtain more and more of the aid, the promised aid of the Holy Spirit, and more and more full and joyful confidence in the loving-kindness of our heavenly Father.

The Holy Ghost is the present representative of Jesus, supplying his absence, and being the advocate, intercessor, and comforter of the church, while our Lord is gone into the far country to receive for himself his kingdom. And this he does with such largeness and fulness of grace and love, that our Lord himself said, "I will tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you."

The Holy Ghost, being the same Spirit by which our Lord was anointed, filled, and animated, and enabled to offer himself without spot unto God (Heb. ix. 14), is given to us also to enable us to tread in the steps of our divine Master, to know the Father's love, to suffer with Christ here, to mortify the deeds of the body, to attain inward purity and holiness, to glow with fervent love, to be empty of self, and glory only in the Lord, even as did our great Redeemer.

Oh what an important office is that which is thus graciously undertaken by the Holy Spirit!—to train up, prepare, and educate the children of God for their everlasting glory. A world of fallen creatures and guilty rebels are for a season spared, that they "may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need," and out of them are gathered those who shall be equal with the angels; those who shall be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and reign for ever and ever. That they may be made meet for this inheritance, the Holy Ghost himself is their teacher and their sanctifier, as well as the beginner of that new life which will last through eternity.

Let us, then, Christian reader, clearly see that in our-

selves is nothing but sin, and guilt, and condemnation ; unbelief, misery, and ruin : but that in the gift of the Holy Ghost our heavenly Father has provided all good things for us, exactly adapted to our many wants and great necessities. Have clear views on this important subject, for though all evil is of us, and all good is of God ; yet through our pride and love of sin, we are always prone to charge evil on God and lay credit to good as if it were our own. St. James guards us against this double error, putting between those opposite falsehoods the solemn charge, " Do not err, my beloved brethren. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God ;" and on the other hand, " Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."

The gracious office of the Spirit in the heart of man is diversified and multiplied, and altogether perfect. Hence in the symbolic book of Revelation he is described as " the seven spirits which are before the throne," and Jesus is said " to have the seven spirits," (Rev. i. 4 ; iii. 1), the number seven being a perfect number, and implying all the many gifts of the Spirit, which are needful for our everlasting bliss.

Meditation.

Oh, how much I have neglected and disregarded that which so infinitely concerns my salvation, the full provision which the God of all grace has made for my recovery ! O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon me, a miserable sinner, and come and dwell evermore in my heart !

6. THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT IN UNDERTAKING AN OFFICE IN OUR REDEMPTION.

The love of the Father, and the love of the Son, and the love of the Holy Spirit, in the recovery of man, is all one. When the apostle Paul had earnestly to entreat the prayers of the Romans, he does it by this twofold plea : " for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit."

Let us refresh our hearts, then, for a moment in dwelling on the love of the Spirit.

Why were not such sinful beings as we were, rebelling against the God of love, passed by altogether? We were alienated from the life of God, and our earnal mind was enmity against him. The full spring of love would not allow it. "I passed by thee and looked upon thee, and behold thy time was a time of love." (Ezek. xvi. 8.) God the Holy Ghost comes to us now, and he is with us as "the God of peace and love."

His whole work manifests his love; his striving with men, his raising up ministers, his inspiration of the sacred volume, the part he took in the life, miracles, and work, resurrection and mediation, of Jesus our head; his free promises of himself to those that ask, the fulness with which he now dwells in Christ for us, and his willingness to come and abide with such poor, needy, wretched worms as we are: oh what love is there in these things! He does not spurn or despise the lowest of the low, the poorest of the poor, the most ignorant of the ignorant, but will hear their cry and will help them.

In the work of comforting the mourner we discern the love of the Spirit. He first convinces of sin, and when our eyes are opened to see its vileness and baseness, then he speaks peace and joy: the title he bears is such a title of love—the Comforter. "I will not leave you comfortless," or orphans, says our divine Redeemer; the Holy Ghost, like a tender parent, is sent to watch over us and teach us all things, and by him Jesus fulfils his predicted office "to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified." How tender must be the love which thus manifests itself! which thus meets the greatest necessity, and makes it the occasion of filling us with beauty, joy, and praise, stability and fruitfulness, to the glory of God our Father!

The very name and emblem by which the Holy Ghost is distinguished seems chosen to express to us the same full and tender love—I mean that of the dove : " When Jesus was baptized the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him, and it abode upon him :" the very name implies mildness and gentleness. Oh that that Spirit which ever abode in the meek and lowly, the holy and heavenly Master, may also, according to his promise, dwell for ever with us !

Meditation.

O my soul, surely thou hast been greatly negligent of thy best and kindest and most powerful friend, and of thy fullest source of comfort, and joy, and happiness! May I think much more hereafter of the love of the divine Spirit to my soul, and may it be manifest that he dwells in me, by my having and shewing his forgiving, gracious, bountiful, and enlarged love to all others, and thus exhibiting the reality of my new birth : " that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

7. OUR DUTY TO THE SPIRIT.

All our privileges call us to duties ; and again, in the fulfilment of those duties is our truest privilege. Duty is that service which we owe to another under the circumstances in which we are placed by him who made us ; to him who is our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, and our Judge, our first and highest service is due. Many are the parts of that duty which we owe to the divine Spirit.

NOT TO RESIST THE SPIRIT. Before the flood, the wickedness of men was great in the earth, because they resisted the Holy Spirit. " And the Lord said, my Spirit shall not always strive with man." The Israelites in general " rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit." Isaiah lxiii. 10.

Before the destruction of Jerusalem, St. Stephen warns

the Jews, " Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost ; " as your fathers did, so do ye. Men resist the Holy Ghost by resisting the truth which proceeds from his inspiration, and is designed to save their souls. In days when the gospel is brought before men with peculiar brightness under the display of miracles, men may be so in love with sin, and so hate holiness, as to be guilty of " blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," (Matt. xii. 31,) which seems to be the obstinate and wilful ascribing of the work of the Holy Ghost to Satan, and so rejecting the gospel in its fullest and highest evidence. The apostle Paul indeed resisted the gospel and its miracles, and obtained mercy, and gives as one reason, because he " did it ignorantly in unbelief," which may guard us against presumption ; and he gives as another reason, that he " might be a pattern " of Christ's long-suffering " to them which should hereafter believe," which may guard us against despair.

To PRAY FOR THE HOLY GHOST. This precious gift, as it is the most important of all gifts we can receive, so it is most clearly promised in the scriptures, and that expressly to those who pray for it. " If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Luke xi. 13. So when the Jews are promised, " I will put my Spirit within you," they are told, " Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." How earnestly, then, even every day, should we ask our most merciful Father, who gave his Son to die for us, to give us also his Holy Spirit to dwell within us!

NOT TO GRIEVE THE SPIRIT. God the Holy Ghost delights in dwelling with men. God our Father " doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." (Lam. iii. 33.) But all sin, because it dishonours God and brings misery on the creature, is most grievous to the Holy Ghost: therefore this solemn charge is given, " Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to

the hearers; and grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." We ought then to be so grateful for the love and work of the Spirit for us, and so sensible of the value of his residence within us, that we should dread grieving him by allowing anything in ourselves contrary to his holy mind and heavenly purity and love. When we grieve him we also "quench the Spirit;" for as damp or wet things put on a fire tend to extinguish its bright flame, and make all dark and dreary, so sin dulls the bright light, and damps the cheering heat of the Spirit of God.

To WALK IN THE SPIRIT (Gal. v. 16.) is both our duty and our privilege. He condescends to dwell in us, to guide us, to lead us, and to teach us, and it is our happy life to walk all day long in his light and his love. Oh the blessedness of having our minds filled with the sense of his power, presence and grace, his willingness to help us at all times, and to dwell in us, as in the temple where he delights to reside! What causes of thankfulness have we to God that he is willing to conduct us in all the paths of holiness and happiness, till he brings us to the promised glory! Now our course should be, more and more to be filled with the Spirit, to increase and grow in the Spirit, to be more manifestly his temples, and his epistles known and read of all men, to the glory of God our Father.

COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST is the last duty we would notice. It is indeed rather a rich privilege than a duty, and is thus noticed twice by St. Paul. (Phil. ii. 1. 2 Cor. iii. 14.) It is believingly, gratefully, and joyfully on our part to receive all those gracious gifts which the Holy Ghost bestows, and to render to him all worship, praise, love, reverence and obedience. It is marked by earnest thirstings after him. Thus our Lord says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." We, in communion with the Holy Ghost, glorify and bless

him, who enriches us with his grace ; so that there is a sweet interchange of mercies and thanksgivings, of gifts and gratitude, of grace and obedience. We pray for grace and peace from the seven spirits which are before the throne ; (Rev. i. 4.) he hears our prayers, fills us with grace and peace, and we rejoice in his love, and say, " Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift ! "

Prayer for the Holy Ghost.

O thou who hast revealed thy love to us under the tender name of Father, and though thou art the High and Lofty One that inhabitest eternity, and we are most evil and sinful, dost yet permit us, by one wearing our form, most dear to thee, even Jesus our Lord, to come with boldness unto thee ; look upon me through that Mediator, that I may be accepted in thy beloved Son, and viewed in him as thine own child.

O my merciful Father, if evil men give good gifts to their children when they ask, wilt not thou give good things to us when we ask ? for thou art our heavenly Father, full of goodness and faithfulness, full of power, riches, truth, and love. Give me then that good gift, thine own Spirit ! Oh deny me not thine own Spirit ! bestow, even upon me, this inestimably precious gift, the Holy Ghost, to dwell in me as in his own temple, to abide there for ever, and to receive from me constant love, faith, obedience, and reverence, while he is my constant teacher, guide, sanctifier, and comforter.

Oh that every thing I do may be under his instruction, controul, and life-giving power ! Help me to pray in the Holy Ghost, to walk in the Spirit, and live after the Spirit ; to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, and evermore to enjoy his most holy and heart-reviving communion.

Preserve me from vexing, rebelling against, quenching, or resisting the Holy Ghost. Let me never by my sins grieve the Spirit from whom is all my light, life, holiness, and joy ! Take not thy Holy Spirit from me, but ever-

more uphold me, even to the end, in thy ways by thy free Spirit.

O Holy Ghost, the Comforter, come thou and dwell in me; shed abroad the love of God in my heart; convince me of the sin of unbelief; convince me of righteousness through him who is gone to the Father; convince me of his victories over Satan; shew me the things of Christ; shew me the things to come; work in me mightily and effectually the work of faith with power, the full assurance of hope, and all the enlargement of love. Holy Ghost, enter thine own temple, and there abide for ever!

Hear me, O my Father! to whom with the Son and the Holy Ghost, three persons in one God, be glory for ever.

8. THE ENLARGED OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY GHOST.

There has been, from the beginning, as the human race has been multiplying, a constant and gradually increasing gift of the Spirit to man. Abel, Enoch, and Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and Joshua, Samuel and all the prophets, David and other pious kings, were raised up, under the Old Testament, through the Holy Spirit. Our Lord's first coming was followed by the enlarged first-fruits of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, and then the church of the living God was still farther enlarged by Gentile converts. Christian truth was seen struggling through the conflicts of the first four or five centuries to the full establishment in the Roman Empire of a visible church. The gradual extension of that church issued in the kingdoms of Europe everywhere nationally acknowledging Christ. At the Reformation, the spiritual church became more distinctly marked and separated from the merely formal church. God has been all along preparing the way for that happy predicted æra, when it shall be said, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," and "the Deliverer shall come out of Sion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

There are large and full promises, of which we have

yet only received a small commencement. "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." All righteousness is eminently wrought in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, and "we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Prayer for the further outpouring of the Spirit.

O God, our Saviour, who hast required us to pray for all men, and hast told us that this is good and acceptable in thy sight, who wilt have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, I earnestly pray thee to fulfil thy gracious promises, and to pour out in these last days of thy Spirit upon all flesh. Impart, I pray thee, the spirit of grace and supplication to thy people Israel, grant the same rich grace to the Gentiles, and let the fulness of the Gentiles come in, and all Israel be saved, and the whole earth be filled with thy glory. Hear me, O my Father! for my Redeemer's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

1. The communications of the Spirit—2. His extraordinary work—3. Enlightening of the Spirit—4. The sanctification of the Spirit—5. The comfort of the Spirit—6. The freedom with which God gives the Spirit—Thanksgiving due for the Spirit.

1. THE COMMUNICATIONS OF THE SPIRIT.

It has pleased God to give us in his word many important details of what the Holy Spirit has done for man from age to age. These details will be briefly noticed.

When the world was first created, and "the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep," then "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters:" and beauty and order, light, warmth, and fruitfulness ensued. "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens."

When man was made in the image and likeness of God, it was through the Spirit. "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Gen. ii. 7. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job xxxiii. 44. And still it is the same power that creates us: "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, and they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the earth." Psalm civ. 30.

In the period before the flood, the Spirit of the Lord raised up righteous Abel, Enoch and Noah. He also strove with the world, pleading in the preaching of Noah, and especially during the time the ark was building, for 120 years.

In the call of Abraham we have the same Spirit working for the benefit of man. "Thou art the Lord God who didst choose Abraham, and brought him forth out of the land of the Chaldees." Neh. ix. 7. "I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him." Isaiah li. 2. And when the covenant was ratified with him and his seed, the burning lamp of fire passed before him as a token of the consent and seal of the Spirit of God.

When Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, the king acknowledged the Spirit of God. "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" Gen. xli. 38.

The same Spirit led the children of Israel out of Egypt, and guided them through the wilderness, and brought them into the promised land. Thus Isaiah says: "As a beast goeth down into the valley the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest, so didst Thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name." Isaiah lxiii. 18. "Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them." Neh. ix. 20. There Moses wrote, under his inspiration, the Pentateuch. There Bezaleel and Aholiab were filled with the Spirit of God for the work of the tabernacle. Exod. xxxi. There the Spirit of God came on wicked Balaam to inspire even him with true prophecies of the future blessedness of Israel.

When the Israelites had conquered Canaan, and were brought themselves into bondage for their sins, the Spirit of the Lord raised up Judges, as Othniel, (Judges iii. 10.) Gideon, (vi. 34.) Jepthah, (xi. 29.) Samson (xiii. 25.) to be their deliverers, and to govern them. How mightily the same Spirit wrought in Elijah his whole history declares.

David, Solomon, and other kings were filled with the same Spirit, and thus have we been blessed with Psalms, Proverbs, and other parts of the Old Testament. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by them, and his words were in their tongues." 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

In a later age the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and many others, down to Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, were called and filled with the Spirit of God, and enabled to enrich the church with that

full treasure, the histories and prophecies of the Old Testament ; the fullest light of prophecy being given in the darkest part of the Jewish history.

In all this history the loving-kindness of God and the sinfulness of man were wonderfully contrasted. While God was thus blessing his people Israel, "they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit." Isaiah lxiii. 10. They mocked the messengers "of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of God arose against his people till there was no remedy." 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. And they were carried captive to Babylon.

But God forsook not his people. He raised up Ezra to help in their return, and Nehemiah to assist in the restoration of the city, and his Spirit filled the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, and they stirred up the people to rebuild the temple, and thus a remnant were again gathered in, and blessed in their own land : "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Our great Lord and Redeemer was filled with the Spirit without measure. He was "conceived of the Holy Ghost." Matt. i. 20. At his baptism the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove, and "through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God." St. Peter declared to Cornelius, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy God and with power. Acts x. 38. Here was indeed a marvellous work ; the Father sending the Son ; the Son emptying himself of his Divine glory, and taking our nature upon him, and the Holy Ghost enabling him in that nature to work miracles, wonders and signs, and glorify his God and our God, his Father and our Father.

Before our Redeemer's death he foretold his leaving his church for a season, and the time of darkness, and sorrow, and tribulation, his disciples should endure during his absence ; but promised that another Comforter should come, and more than supply his absence, so that it was advantageous for them that he should thus for a time be absent.

On the resurrection of our Redeemer, and his appearance

in heaven on our behalf, followed, according to his faithful promise, the larger gift of the Spirit, and all the wonders of the day of Pentecost, when three thousand souls were added to the church, and the gift of tongues was granted. The qualifying the apostles for their work, the holy boldness with which the once fearful disciples were endued, and the gifts bestowed on them, and on the churches through them, make this a very memorable period in the history of the Spirit's communications.

At length the same blessed Spirit was given to us Gentiles, first in the case of Cornelius, and then by the apostle Paul, who was remarkably converted, and raised up to be a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles.

The glowing promise, which has yet to be realized in its fulness—"It shall come to pass, in the last days, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh"—thus began its glorious course of accomplishment, and how blessed the state of men is under his grace, we learn in the accounts of the primitive church: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness, and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. Then had the churches rest, and were edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

The four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and their epistles to the churches, were given under his immediate inspiration, through Jewish writers, to the Christian church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, supplying us with farther treasures of holy oil to furnish our lamps during the absence of our heavenly Bridegroom.

The Acts of the Apostles are emphatically the history of the Spirit for a period of about thirty years, beginning with his work at Jerusalem, detailing the rejection of the gospel by the Jews, and leaving us at Rome, the then metropolis of the Gentile world.

The Revelation furnishes us with the further history of the Spirit, taking up the sacred narrative at the fall of Je-

rusalem, and continuing it through the varied trials and sufferings of the church, with the grace given to it from age to age, till it closes in the return of our Lord, and his reign over our earth. How often are we charged in this book : " He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Every fresh manifestation of God, as we see in the giving of the law, in the building of the temple, in the captivity, and on the resurrection of Christ, being connected with larger and larger communications of his Spirit, we may hope for the largest of all at the return of our Redeemer. Then " the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Meditation.

What thanks do I owe, what love and gratitude, what confidence and joyful obedience to that heavenly Father and that gracious Redeemer, and that Divine Spirit, the one living and true God, who leaves men not as orphans, in a waste wilderness, unprotected and uncared for, but has, in all ages, by his Spirit, striven with us sinners ! Oh what joy should fill my heart that there is a progressive advance in his communications, and that since my Redeemer went away, not only is the Holy Spirit more largely imparted, but we have the blessed assurance that he shall abide with us for ever. Let me not, then, neglect my special advantages, but earnestly thirst after these living waters, and have in me that which shall be " a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."

2. THE EXTRAORDINARY WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

We will consider the more extraordinary work of the Spirit under its two most important features—the inspiration of the scriptures, and the working of miracles.

First, THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES. This is directly ascribed to the Spirit of God. " All scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. iii. 16. " Holy men

of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter i, 21. And this is so completely the case, that every part of the Bible is written under Divine guidance for our learning. This makes the scriptures, in every part, the word of God and not of man. Thus the Bible is inestimably precious, and altogether distinct from every other book. God has not only given outward evidence of this that is convincing to the most learned of men, but an inward evidence that is altogether satisfactory to every prayerful and humble reader of the Bible. Its promises are fulfilled to its own comfort ; its doctrines correspond to his own experience ; its statements agree to the actual condition of all things, and its holiness shews its divinity. The prophecies of the state of the Jews, the Christian church, and the whole world, are visibly fulfilled in the sight of all men.

THE WORKING OF MIRACLES in the early days of Christianity was the special gift of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord appeared to the eleven apostles after his resurrection, and after commanding them to preach his gospel, pronounced, " these signs shall follow them that believe : in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." The apostles very extensively, as we find in the Acts and the Epistles, conferred these gifts, but there is no statement to lead us to think these gfts were to be permanent ; nor do we find in the scriptures that the power of working miracles was conferred through any other than the apostles. These miracles visibly proved that the Holy Ghost was come according to our Lord's promise, and so shewed that he was the Messiah, and that his sacrifice was accepted : they established the claim of the apostles to be the true messengers of God, and divinely testified the inspiration of their writings. How thankful, then, ought we to be for these miraculous powers, and how very distinct are they from those very awful delusions, both of Popery and of some

professing Protestants, who have presumptuously claimed, first, apostolic gifts, and then apostolic powers ! But let us remember that there is "a more excellent way," which, never fails—THE GIFT OF LOVE.

Meditation.

Seeing that the gracious Spirit has moved holy men of God to write the sacred scriptures, surely they are most worthy of my deep study, and constant and prayerful searching. Seeing that they are confirmed by such mighty miracles, how unspeakably weighty and important the truths which they convey, and how awful the guilt and danger of neglecting them ! May I then give earnest heed to the things there spoken, lest at any time I let them slip.

3. THE ENLIGHTENING OF THE SPIRIT.

At the creation, when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, the first effect was, God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." Thus it is in the new creation of the soul ; "for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Christ is "the true light," which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. Christ shews in the clearest and strongest of all lights God's love to every man, however sinful, at the very time that the evil of sin is also most powerfully manifested. Thus the divine character has a blaze of light and glory thrown around it, calculated to attract every sinner's heart, or leave him wholly without excuse if he neglect so great a salvation. And that there might be no possible reason but the wilful love of sin for this neglect ; the Holy Spirit is promised to them that ask ; to discover to us this blessed light in all its beauty and purity. "Howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." John xvi. 13, 14.

The need of this Divine teaching arises from that dark-

ness which sin has spread over our mind, so that we call good evil, and evil good. We think Satan's lies are the truth, and we esteem our merciful and gracious Creator, who gives us holy laws for our happiness, to be our enemy and not our friend. In the expressive words of scripture, men walk by nature "in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness (or hardness) of their heart."

The light which shines in the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and intercession of our Redeemer, fully discovered to us by the teaching of the Spirit, dispels all this ignorance of God. We see the force of the direction: "Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace with him." He is really and truly LOVE. All our hard thoughts of him are vile ingratitude, and inexcusable blindness. The gospel is thus sent to men "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith which is in Jesus."

God has revealed his grace, that, thereby believing his truth and loving-kindness to us sinners, our ignorance and our unjust hatred of him may be removed. Through the gospel, the Holy Ghost wholly subdues, by love itself, our rebellious will, and brings us in willing and joyful obedience of heart to that state of mind which alone can make us happy in God, our own God, for ever and ever. But if we, from delight in sin, trample upon and despise all this love, how sore and dreadful in the day of judgment will be our punishment!

Christian reader, has this light of truth shined into your heart? Can you say of God, who "is light, and in whom is no darkness at all, we walk in the light as he is in the light, and we have fellowship one with another" (having the very same mind and will as God himself), "and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin?"

Meditation.

Oh what a change is this ! to be "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son ! " Surely, if this great light has been discovered to me, I should "shew forth the praises of him who has called me out of darkness into this marvellous light." How miserable is every human creature, whatever his earthly situation, who cannot walk in the light of God's love, and is ignorant what the mind of the great Creator is towards him ! How can he exercise confidence, and love, and joy of heart, towards his God ? The Lord discover to me and all men, more and more of his loving-kindness, that however it may have been true of us, "ye were sometimes darkness," it may at length be true, "but now are ye light in the Lord ;" and may we "walk as the children of light."

4. THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT.

The Holy Ghost is the source of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." The scriptures therefore very distinctly mark this part of the work of the Spirit, and it is of unspeakable importance that we should understand and experience this in our own souls.

Our Lord thus speaks of it : "When he is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The reproving or convincing work of the Spirit is here described as being threefold.

(1.) HE CONVINCES OF SIN. There is a natural conscience in every man filling him with alarm in the commission of great and manifest sins ; but the love and habit of sin soon deaden this voice of the natural conscience. Now the work of the Spirit not only leaves an abiding conviction of our sinfulness, but leads us to see a sin which natural conscience discerns not ; the awful sin of disbelieving God's love in sending his Son Jesus to die for us, and thus disregarding the highest proof of love, and insult-

ing God by rejecting the strongest evidence of his goodness to us. The Spirit shews the pride of heart, the love of sin, and the mockery of God, connected with unbelief, and so leads us to self-loathing, and true repentance, and turning to God.

(2.) He convinces also of righteousness. There is none righteous, no, not one. All come short of the glory of God. The Lord Jesus alone fulfilled the law in every jot and tittle; but this he did as our Head, and in our nature; and now God sees, through Jesus, a perfect righteousness in my nature. He accepted his obedience in our behalf, as was proved by Christ's going to the Father, and our seeing him no more on earth. And now Christ is made of God unto us righteousness. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." The Holy Spirit shews us, in the word, and by opening our understanding to understand the scriptures, that in Christ we have the righteousness of God (2 Cor. v. 21,) without the law (Rom. iii.) through faith; thus God has provided for all our great spiritual necessities in Jesus, and we are complete in him. "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come." Standing accepted in Jesus we have free access to God even as though we had not sinned; and when the Holy Spirit convinces us of this, we are filled with holy confidence, love, and gratitude.

(3.) He convinces of judgment. Satan's fearful title, verified in the actual state of our fallen race, is, the Prince of this world. Little as they think it, our tremendous enemy works in all the children of disobedience, leading them captive at his will. But his judgment is determined and is rapidly approaching: "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the Prince of this world be cast out." John xii. 31. Our Redeemer has undertaken the mighty work. Innumerable as are the obstacles, "he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth." Isaiah xlii. 3, 4. The Divine Spirit, who shews us things to come,

shews us the falling empire of Satan (Rev. xii. 10,) in the midst of all its apparent peaceable possession and dominion; shews us the righteousness of God in this overthrow, and enables us heartily to concur in the mind of God, and long for the return of our Redeemer to accomplish his promises in that righteous judgment which he will execute at his second coming, on Satan and his followers. Thus we have one mind with God, our affections are set on things above, and we, "through the Spirit," are waiting "for the hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal. v. 5), and daily gaining present victories by faith over Satan our enemy. Ephes. vi. 10.

The beginning of this great change wrought in the heart is called in the scriptures being "born again,"—being "born of the Spirit." John iii. Its progress is called "the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 2. The whole of this great work of the Spirit, the doctrine of free salvation, by which he accomplishes it, with the most glorious change and transformation it effects in a vile sinner, is clearly stated by St. Paul. Titus iii. 3—8.

Another material part of sanctification is THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii.), and it proves its divine nature by all that is lovely, holy, and excellent; "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." As we see these things produced in our hearts and lives, and we love others in deed and in truth, "we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." These things glorify God, adorn the gospel, benefit our fellow-men, and give us the sweet assurance that we have really received the Spirit of Christ into our hearts.

MEETNESS FOR HEAVENLY GLORY is the last part of the sanctifying work of the Spirit which I would notice. Only those who on earth are made like God in his holy character, can dwell in his kingdom of light and glory for ever. The great object of the glorious gospel is to accomplish this; by the bright display it gives of God in our redemp-

tion by our Lord Jesus Christ, with the amazing fact of his becoming man for our salvation, his agonies, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession. Such a stamp of evil is thus put upon sin, such a deep engraving of God's love to man is wrought in the very nature of man, such an evidence of the excellence of the law is given, such a manifestation of the equity of punishment and wrath is displayed, and such a glory is seen to follow present suffering, that Christ, Christ only, is the wisdom of God for our salvation. This is God's ordinance, through the Spirit, for changing the sinner's heart. The things of Christ come with such power to the soul that we see vileness and abomination in the sins we once loved, and loveliness and glory in the holiness we once hated ; God himself in his beauty and full excellence wins by holy love the sinner's heart to himself. The true knowledge of God, as given to us in Christ Jesus, has a transforming effect, to make us like God. We become like him when " we see him as he is."

Meditation.

How wonderful is the love of God in the provision which he has made for my salvation ! Oh was it not enough that he gave his Son to be incarnate—to live, to die, to rise again, and to intercede for me ; but does he not also provide his Spirit, and promise him to me, that there may not only be deliverance from my guilt, but also deliverance from the love, the pollution, and the power of sin ? What more could have been done for me ? Lord, help me constantly, then, in fervent prayer, to ask for and seek the sanctifying energy of thine own Spirit, to make me meet for thy glory.

5. THE COMFORT OF THE SPIRIT.

Much of the life of a Christian is in giving up present advantages of this world, enduring afflictions for the sake of Christ, and living not by sight but by faith. He has to

oppose the great current of the world in confessing an absent and speedily-returning Lord ; he has to oppose the corrupt desires of his own fallen nature in crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts ; he has to endure many losses, and to be counted a fool for Christ's sake. If he be, as he is, truly righteous, he has to suffer real persecution for righteousness ; if he be, as he is, sinful and guilty, he suffers just chastisement and affliction for his daily sins and iniquities, that he may not be condemned with the world.

But the Lord has provided for the present support and for the abundant consolation of his people, the gracious Comforter, the Holy Ghost. And his grace is so sufficient that that most suffering Christian, St. Paul, says, " I take pleasure in infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Oh what thanksgivings do our worst trials occasion, by shewing us more of the loving-kindness of God ! How St. Paul bursts out in holy gratitude : " Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation." 2 Cor. i. 4.

All other comfort comes through the Holy Ghost. The Saviour himself was anointed for his office by the Spirit of the Lord God, " to comfort all that mourn." All his ministers, as well as Barnabas, that " son of consolation," (Acts iv. 36), are raised up to comfort the people of the Lord : and he is so intent upon this that he thrice gives them this direction in one short charge. Isaiah xl. 1, 2.

But what is the peculiar character of this comfort ! It is not to remove our affliction, but to give us joy in it as a pledge of coming glory. " If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye ; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." 1 Pet. v. 14. It is not like the comfort the world gives us, making us well pleased with ourselves, and throwing blame upon every one but ourselves, and so fostering our pride and high-mindedness. It is rather by shewing us our real sinfulness and just desert of all wrath,

leading us to confess it, and thus shewing us, not only the righteousness of God in our affliction, but his exceeding loving-kiudness in giving us evil things now that we may receive good things hereafter. Psalm xciv. 12—15 ; 1 Cor. xi. 32. Nor does the Holy Ghost comfort us by shewing that we shall be here delivered from affliction ; he comforts us rather by shewing the privilege of suffering here, and making us happy in suffering. (See Matt. v. 10—12.) " Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake." Phil. i. 29. " Happy is the man whom God correcteth." Job i. 17.

Yet it is not in the affliction itself that we can be happy ; its very name testifies that it is evil and grievous ; but in its blessed effects here and hereafter. Hence " we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Rom. v. 3—5. And it afterwards " worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." Heb. xii. 11.

And then, hereafter, oh what tongue can express the glories connected with our suffering with Christ ! " The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Rom. viii. 18. " Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Contemplate then, Christian reader, the day of judgment, which is the day of thy glory. Our Lord himself endured the cross by contemplating the joy set before him, and we must do the same if we would endure our lighter cross. How near are we to that great day which will disclose for ever what is real wisdom, and blessedness, and glory ; and stamp for ever misery and folly, and madness on the ways of the worldly ! It cannot be far distant ! All the accumulating signs of the times, and voices of the prophets, with one accord, testify, " Behold the Bridegroom cometh ! " How awful his majesty ! how pure his righteousness ! how perfect his judgment ! Have you suffered with him ? Have you been conformed to him ?

Are you like-minded with him? Oh what glory and blessedness for ever in his presence belong now to you! Think little of man's judgment, "whose breath is in his nostrils:" think every thing of his judgment who will reward every man according to his real character and works. The true sight of these things and our real preparedness for this day is the only solid and abiding ground of comfort. And the gospel alone furnishes you with that view of God which gives you one mind with him, and enables you to welcome this day: to look at it with holy joy and confidence, and not with grief and dismay.

May I so experience the comfort of the Spirit as that blessed apostle did, who could appeal to his converts as a matter of such absolute certainty: "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercies," as to make these self-evident truths the very ground of his exhortation to holy love and union. Lord and Father, give me those consolations in Christ, which will make me bold in thy cause and service, and bear me above every trial for thee.

6. THE FREEDOM WITH WHICH GOD GIVES HIS SPIRIT.

The work of the Spirit being so inestimably precious, it is a cause of great joy that his Holy Spirit is freely and absolutely promised, without exception, to all that ask.

It is compared to the rain of heaven, freely descending from God's bounty and love in copious and abundant supplies, to meet every want without our having done any thing to merit it: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.' Isaiah xlvi. 3. "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary." Psalm lxviii. 9. See also Ezek. xxxiv. 36, and Acts ii. 17.

As nothing is more infinitely necessary to us than the Spirit, so no promise in the Bible is more full and clear

than that peculiarly precious of the precious promises: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him;" and the very change in the form of expression is most encouraging. It is not, give the Holy Spirit to his children, but give the Holy Spirit to *them that ask* him; and thus a promise that is especially valuable to us, is given to us in the most general expressions that our hearts could desire. And to this is joined an appeal to those paternal feelings which have such strength in every father's heart, with yet an increase of power of expression and thought in the statement of our "being evil," while our heavenly Father is only and altogether good, and the farther statement, "how much more" shall he do this for us.

Indeed, how can we doubt this, when we know that our Lord Jesus Christ took our nature upon him, and in all things fulfilled the requirements of the law, and endured the penalties of transgression that he might receive the Spirit for us?—and that now being our head and representative, and having ascended unto his Father, he has "received gifts for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them?"

The single limitation is the direction, Ask. "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." So in the promises of the Spirit, and all the blessings of the new covenant to the Jews, there is the like limitation, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." O blessed limitation of tender love, by which our heavenly Father shews us that he loves us, so that he will not be content with us at a distance, but that he will have us in his presence, and the enjoyment of communion with him! O blessed limitation, or rather unspeakable privilege, that he should thus so encourage us to call upon him for what we need, as to invite us near to him, open his arms wide for us, and by holding out rich gifts attract and win us back from our horrible distance, enmity and rebellion

against him, who is the Father of lights and the God of love and peace !

What then remains for us, Christian reader, but with full confidence in his promises to go to him from day to day, and wait upon him continually for this precious gift ! Waiting in daily prayer is the sure means of gaining the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Observe that plain direction : " Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart ; wait, I say, on the Lord." Psalm xxvii. 14. Waiting is the posture of faith and hope, (Rom. viii. 24, 25.) fully expecting the answer of prayer, though it be long delayed : " though it tarry, wait for it, it will surely come ; it will not tarry."

And when we consider that our Christian life is " waiting for the coming of the Lord " (1 Cor, i. 7.) our great reward in his glory at his coming is not given until he personally return and raise his dead saints ; we need not be surprised if, to humble us, to shew us the value of the blessing we seek, and to make it more precious when it is given, that we have perhaps for a lengthened season to wait for the Holy Spirit. Only be assured of the faithfulness of that word which the Lord has spoken : " They shall not be ashamed that wait for me." Isaiah xlix. 23. " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. x. 13.

Think, too, of the glorious inheritance of which the " Holy Spirit of promise " is the " seal " and " earnest." We are " heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; " nothing less than God himself is our portion. We are to have his pure and holy, his merciful and perfect mind ; to be like him, and one with him. God is our vast inheritance, God in all his fulness, riches, and glory, our own God for ever and ever. Surely, then, if for earthly good, men have to toil and labour, wait and hope, well may we wait and " labour for that meat " which " endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto us."

Meditation.

Freely thou promisest, O our Father, and most certain

is thy word ; away then with all unbelieving fears ; away with all carelessness and indifference. I may gain this most precious gift. I may have the Holy Ghost to dwell in me. Oh let me seek with confidence, but seek with a diligence, and knock with an earnestness, in some proportion to the magnitude and inestimable value of the blessing.

7. THANKSGIVINGS DUE FOR THE SPIRIT.

You may observe in the scriptures how grateful the servants of Christ have been for this inestimable gift. When the Holy Spirit was first poured out, "praising God" was the leading character of the whole church. We are "called out of darkness" into this "marvellous light," that we should "shew forth his praises."

The apostles begin several of their epistles with praise for this grace: thus St. Paul tells the Corinthians, "I thank my God always on your behalf," for "the grace of God which is given you by Christ Jesus." 1 Cor. i. 4. He opens that to the Ephesians with a burst of holy gratitude: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus. St. Peter does the same in his first epistle. (i. 1—5.) St. Paul, when considering the grace of God bestowed on the Corinthians, exclaims with holy rapture, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

And indeed what can be more wonderful than that the Holy Spirit should make our bodies the temples in which he dwells, should help our infirmities, make intercession for us, and give us the privilege of "praying in the Holy Ghost." Why have we not more gratitude for this precious gift? Because of our unbelief. We realize not the truth of God's promises ; we ask not, therefore, for them in faith, but with a doubtful mind, not regarding the warning: "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the

wind and tossed. But let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

Nor are we duly sensible of the blessing of those gifts of the Spirit which are already bestowed on us. We all have the day of grace shining upon us ; and the holy scriptures, the very writing of the Spirit, continually set before us. We have already received in Jesus our Head the fulness of the Spirit for our use, and the promise of the Spirit to us personally, on our asking for it. What songs of praise these things demand ! Thank God for what you have. "Unto him that hath shall more be given."

See, too, if you cannot trace many workings of the Spirit through the voice of conscience in your past life. How often have evil thoughts been condemned by this voice, and you have been kept from evil ways when you would willingly have entered into them if left to yourself ! How often have good thoughts come unexpectedly into your minds with power and energy, and though you have not cherished them, yet has the Holy Spirit striven with you thus again and again ! Learn to be thankful for these beginnings of good in your heart. Like a little light, at a great distance, in a dark night, let it lead you onward. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord."

And Christians, dear fellow-Christians, have we not found the word of God most sweet and precious to us, full of holy light, full of tender love, coming with constraining efficacy to our hearts, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance ? Oh let us be very thankful for that life, and unction, and sweetness, the Holy Ghost has thus given us in the word of truth ! Have we not had many refreshing seasons of private prayer, when with streaming eyes we confessed our sinfulness, so aggravated by God's love ; and, when melted by full confidence in his fatherly heart and tender compassion, have we not with fervency of spirit sought his grace, that we might be wholly and for ever his hereafter ? This we owe to his Spirit ; for this too we should give thanks : what have we that we have not received ?

And if we have been strengthened against our natural corruption for any painful and self-denying duty ; reproving sin, going contrary to the course of this world, crossing our previous inclination, and sacrificing our worldly interests, here is fresh cause of praise and gratitude to him who has strengthened us with might, by his Spirit in the inner man.

And if, after all our rebellions, all our backslidings, all our grievous falls, and the dishonour we have put on his name by our inconsistencies, we are still in the way to Zion, with our faces heavenward ; more humbled, but more decided—more sensible of sin, but more firm for God—oh, to what can we attribute it, but that God has upheld us by his free Spirit ! Let us, then, give all thanks to his great and glorious name. Let us glory in the Lord alone.

And if he has given us his Spirit so far, what joyful hope should it excite for the time to come ! "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Christ." What exulting hopes should this seal and earnest of the Spirit raise within us ! "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." The work of the Spirit is the very beginning of the glory to come. All our aspirations after God, our desires of conformity to him, our concurrence in his plans, our oneness of mind with him, what is it but the very seed of a future tree of glory, which, however it may be buried and die here, will rise, and grow, and spread with everlasting beauty and majesty in the coming kingdom of Christ, at the resurrection of the saints, on the speedy return of our Redeemer !

THANKSGIVING TO GOD.

Glory be to thee, O heavenly Father, for all those inestimable blessings which I have received through thine own Spirit.

Thou hast taught me to see, in the works of creation, and in every living being, the power of thy Spirit ; thou sendest forth thy Spirit, and they are created. I will sing,

then, unto the Lord as long as I live ; I will sing praises unto my God, while I have my being.

I magnify thee for that love of the Spirit which raised up holy patriarchs and prophets, apostles and evangelists, and gave them the word of inspiration to be a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths.

I thank thee, O Holy Ghost, for all those mighty works which they wrought, that we might be sure that it is thy word which they have delivered to us.

More especially to thee, O Holy Ghost, be all praise for that wondrous love to which we owe the incarnation of our Divine Redeemer, and his being anointed with thy grace without measure to work miracles, and to offer himself without spot to God, and that he was declared the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. And thanks, unutterable thanks, be unto thee, that thus Jesus became the Mediator to convey to us sinners the unsearchable riches of Divine grace.

Thou hast opened my eyes to see this thy love, and my own great blindness, and hardness of heart, and perverseness, in slighting and rebelling against so much love. O more and more come into my heart ! shed abroad there the love of God ; humble me more ; fill me with the sense of the loving-kindness of God our Saviour towards me ; that I may, with full purpose of heart, cleave to him, and live wholly to the praise of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons in one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST, OUR LIFE.

1. The actual Condition of Men—2. Our Recovery in Christ—3. The Life which we have in Christ—4. The Receiving of Christ—5. The Risen Life on Earth—6. The Power by which this Life is sustained.

1. THE ACTUAL CONDITION OF MEN IN GENERAL.

THERE is a life peculiar to the genuine Christian ; and unspeakably important for our present and final happiness it is that we should know what this life is, and enter into its reality and blessedness, in our own actual enjoyment of it. "He that hath the Son hath life ; and he that hath not the Son hath not life ;" such is the scripture testimony. To guide and assist you in attaining this life will be the object of several successive chapters, beginning with Christ, our life.

We will first give an account of our loss of this life. Let us notice the actual facts now existing in the sight of every one. Sin is the defect of perfect obedience to God's will ; and all mankind are, without exception, thus sinful with respect to their Creator. This is not confined to any particular class of men, or to any particular nation. All have done what, in their natural conscience, however little that may have been enlightened by the knowledge of his will, they knew to be wrong before God. We appeal to every conscience in proof of this. There is an universal tendency to sin ; the cause must be general which produces so general an effect. The nature of a thing must be judged

by its effects—universal sinfulness proves man's universal tendency to sin. All have sinned from their early youth, continually, and progressively. As soon as a child begins to act, he begins to sin, and if left to his natural disposition without restraint, goes on in sin. We find the same evil tendency through all the periods of life. As we know that a river steadily proceeding, and growing stronger and deeper as it flows, must have springs by which it is fed, so are we sure that a constant and growing tendency in man must have original sources of evil. The fact that all men sin in spite of the clearest convictions of reason, proves the same truth. See the idolatry of so many millions of our race. See the natural carelessness of every mind, even in Christian lands, to spiritual things. See their dislike to communion with God, and their alienation of mind from him.

Look again at this stream of sin swelling over every boundary and check with which, in the providence of God, it has been met. The deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the separation of the Jews for God with astonishing miracles; their captivity, their deliverance, the gift of God's only Son to die for sin, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the fulness of God's word, the taking of a people out of the Gentiles, the mercies of the Reformation, all these varied dispensations of judgment and mercy have not for any lengthened period proved efficacious to stop the flood of sin. The servants that God has raised up from time to time, with eminent faith and toil and boldness have laboured, and yet sin covers the world. If after all labour, the soil still brings forth briars and thistles, we may say that it is radically bad. Man is, then, radically corrupt.

And this corruption is TOTAL. When our Saviour enumerates what comes out of the heart, he mentions not one good thing. Matt. xv. He says "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and we know the flesh is quite opposed to the Spirit (Gal. v. 17), which is the source of all that is good. The mending of the flesh is impossible. We must "put off the old man, and put on the new man." The

expressions in Rom. iii. 9—18, are such as to shew that there is no good in man by nature, but that he is full of all uncleanness and sinfulness.

Whence, then, has arisen all this evil? The Bible is the only book that shews both its origin and its perfect remedy. Sin came into our world by the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve. Placed in the garden of Eden, surrounded by every good; the command was given him by his all-bountiful, wise, and holy Creator, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Satan, the Devil, a fallen Spirit, who had himself rebelled against God, full of enmity to him, and to man as created by him, took the form of a serpent, and threw doubts of God's words before the mind of Eve. She believed the Devil before God, and broke his plain command; Adam yielded to the temptation with her, and thus both fell under the righteous condemnation of the Holy God, lost their happy abode in paradise, and became parents of children born, not in the image and likeness of God, but "in their own likeness, and after their own image." "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" The streams cannot rise higher than their spring and origin.

The effect of this was, that as men multiplied on the face of the earth, they became exceedingly wicked. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." He sent in consequence the awful judgment of the deluge, to be a lasting memorial of his fearful displeasure against sin and a world of sinners. Noah was preserved in the ark from this destruction, and on going out from the ark offered burnt-offerings. The Lord regarded the sacrifice of Noah, which pointed out the sacrifice of our great Redeemer, and promised that the purposes of his grace should triumph over man's sinfulness. "The Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for

man's sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

Here is our state then : born in sin, evil from our youth ; our hearts " deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," yet under a plan of grace, forbearance, and long-suffering, by which the Lord would recover us from this fallen state, deliver us from his righteous curse on sin, and bring us to the knowledge and enjoyment of his presence and blessedness.

The state in which we are, naturally, is called by the scriptures, being " dead in trespasses and sins." It is, indeed, a most awful state ; one in which the soul is as dead to spiritual truths, to holy and heavenly things, as a dead corpse is to sensible things. No real love to God, no delight in his holy and righteous character, no communion with him as revealed to us in his word, no happiness in calling upon his name ; no regard to his glory, no submission of heart to all his ways.

But in the place of all real holiness and happiness, men are under the tyrannous bondage of sin and Satan.

The creature of God is living regardless of the will and glory of his Creator, and spending every power and gift imparted to him in direct acts of rebellion against him. He is setting up, in the pride of his heart, his own will, and wisdom, and lust, against the good pleasure, the infinite wisdom, and the perfect will of that holy and almighty and gracious Being by whom he was formed, and is daily sustained, and will be shortly judged.

Yet the Lord forbears for a season to cut him off in the midst of his rebellion ; and this in infinite goodness, that he may have a season of grace, for repentance and turning to God. He is therefore " a prisoner of hope," and under a dispensation of grace.

Under this forbearance and loving-kindness of God, men are now living. The great mass of mankind are disregarding all this goodness, and thinking, because God forbears at present to punish, that they shall for ever escape his righteous judgment. Rom. ii. 1—5.

Meditation.

I feel in myself the truth of the divine testimony. My own heart confirms it. How full is it of all evil thoughts! How hard do I find it to raise my mind to God, and to keep my heart with him! How naturally and easily all worldly things occupy my mind; but with what difficulty and constraint are spiritual and heavenly thoughts maintained! O Lord, in mercy look upon me, and visit me with thy salvation!

2. OUR RECOVERY OF SPIRITUAL LIFE IN CHRIST.

We here enter upon the deepest of all mysteries. The nature of our redemption has indeed been already explained, but the immediate connection of that with the Christian life remains to be unfolded, "and great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

The Bible is, throughout, the record of this mystery. In the commencing promise, through the curse on the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel," we have the bright light of our recovery first dawning on our world, which shines more and more, till the completed glory of the last chapters of Revelation, when "there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the heavenly city, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."

The way in which it pleased God to effect this is full of heavenly wisdom and holy love. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word was "the only-begotten of the Father;" his well-beloved and co-equal Son: one who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," for he was

God. Let us see the reality and glory of his Divine nature or Godhead ; for this is all essential to shew us the true value of our recovery, and to give real efficacy to it.

The astonishing grace of his humiliation can never be fully told : though his people have some knowledge, it yet "passeth knowledge." We are told, that though he was "in the form of God," having all the majesty and glory of the Godhead, " he made himself of no reputation ;" he divested himself of all that glory, and became a weak and suffering man like us. " Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich."

O wonderful act of condescension and love, never to be spoken of without admiration and exulting gratitude ! How little do we know of our God when we are alienated from him who thus visited us in our low estate ! The person of our Lord Jesus Christ is full of unfathomable wisdom and mystery, adapted in every way for God's glory and man's salvation and highest honour. Hooker observes, " God in Christ is generally the medicine which doth cure the world, and Christ in us is the receipt of that same medicine whereby we are every one particularly cured."*

* The following statement of Hooker respecting the person of Christ, and the varied erroneous opinions upon it, is so clear and comprehensive that I subjoin it.

" There are but four things which concur to make complete the whole state of our Lord Jesus Christ—his Deity ; his manhood ; the conjunction of both, and the distinction of the one from the other, being joined in one. Four principal heresies there are which have in these things withstood the truth,—Arians by bending themselves against the Deity of Christ ; Apollinarians by maiming and misinterpreting that which belongeth to his human nature ; Nestorians by rending Christ asunder and dividing him into two persons ; the followers of Eutyches by confounding in his person those natures which they should distinguish. Against these there have been four most ancient General Councils,—the Council of Nice to define against Arians ; against Apollinarians the Council of Constantinople ; the Council of Ephesus against Nestorians; against Eutychians the Chalcedon Council. In four words, αληθως, τελεως, αδιαιρετως, ασυγχυτως, *truly, perfectly, indivisibly, distinctly*—the first applied to his being God, and the second to his being man, the third to his being of both one, and the fourth to his still continuing in that one both—we may fully, by way of abridgment, comprise whatsoever antiquity hath at large handled, either in declaration of Christian belief or in refutation of the aforesaid heresies. Within the compass of which four heads I may truly affirm that all heresies which touch but the person of Jesus

His life, too, manifested throughout the same grace as his incarnation. He fulfilled all righteousness, he became obedient to the law in every jot and in every tittle. In a world of sinners he, through the eternal Spirit, gave what no being in the human form had ever before given—a pattern of victory over all temptations, sinless obedience to all God's holy laws, and perfect confidence, amidst all sufferings, in the righteous and holy will of his heavenly Father. With this he underwent the sufferings which our fallen nature had merited ; the curse of the law which we had broken fell on him ; the death which our sins had justly incurred was inflicted on him ; in the grave, to which we were justly sentenced, his body was laid ; the place of departed spirits, to which, through sin, all the spirits of men were consigned after death, he entered.

Thus having, in our nature, shewn forth a perfect example of entire conformity to the will of God, and the possibility of man through the Spirit obeying that will ; having endured in our nature the righteous wrath of God against sin, and so quenched that curse which lay upon that nature, his spirit re-animated that body which could not see corruption ; he was raised triumphantly from the grave, he ascended with our flesh into the presence of God, he has reconciled thereby our very nature to the Holy God, and through him it is now righteous in God to receive those wearing the human form which the Son of God wears, and to give them every blessing when they return to God by him.

Such is the glorious and wondrous plan of Divine grace. While "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," he has provided a way by which we may be "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance

Christ, whether they have risen in these latter days or in any age heretofore, may be, with great facility, brought to confine themselves." Keble's Hooker, vol. ii. book 5.

of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Christ, then, is our life, as he purchased life for us (1 John iv. 9); as he works in us the meetness for our heavenly inheritance. (Col. i. 12.) As life is in him as its head and root, its fountain and treasury (1 John v. 11); as he is the way to the Father (John xiv. 6); as he prepares heavenly glory for us (John xiv. 2, 3); and will communicate it to us at the last day (2 Tim. iv. 8; Rev. vii. 17; and it is in his glory we are glorified for ever. (Rev. xxii. 3, 4.)

Oh then, would you obtain this life, come to Jesus and trust in him. He is the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Heb. v. 9.

Meditation.

In what way could all God's perfections be more illustrated, the equity and goodness of his law be more exhibited, the wickedness of all cavils against his truth be more manifested, the exceeding riches of his loving-kindness to man be more displayed, than by his own Son emptying himself of his divine glory, appearing in our feeblest form, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, promised also to us, yielding perfect obedience unto God, dying for us, and then rising again to be our life? Oh how good that law, when the lawgiver himself fulfils it! How consistent with perfect loving-kindness all its penalties, when he who annexed those penalties to it endured them for our sakes! How just and holy, how gracious and merciful, my God is! And think how awful must be the guilt of rejecting all this provision of mercy, and how sore the punishment of such transgression; and dread, O my soul, above everything, neglecting so great salvation!

3. THE LIFE WHICH WE HAVE IN CHRIST JESUS.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is called "the word of life." It

is said, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Christ is "the light of the world, and he that followeth him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." There is a real life to be derived from him. As by nature we are dead in trespasses and sins, so by grace when baptized into the death of Jesus we die to sin and gain life unto God. It is indeed a death and life incomprehensible to a worldly and unconverted man (1 Cor. ii. 14), but not less real or inestimably important on that account. The apostle tells the Colossians, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." So he tells the Galatians, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."

Let us endeavour to illustrate this peculiarly important truth. We know that the life of the body depends on its union with the soul. If the soul be separated from the body, the body immediately becomes inanimate, and soon begins to corrupt and decay till the whole is a mass of corruption and ruin. This is an exact picture of the state of the soul when it is separated from God. There is a scriptural distinction between existence and life. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life." The souls of all men living in the world have existence; but without the indwelling of God by his Spirit, it is an existence which is corrupt and abominable, full of all filthiness and defilement, spreading infection and death. It is only the soul that has believed in Jesus that has true life. The good Shepherd himself declares, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Thus "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

What is this life? in what does it consist? I will endeavour to make this as clear and distinct as the Scriptures enable us to do.

It is a life of RESTORATION TO GOD'S FAVOUR. By believing in Christ we come to the blessed conviction and assurance that God still bears a favourable and kind and gracious feeling towards us, notwithstanding all our sins, and that he has "reconciled the world unto himself." God looks upon his beloved Son in our nature, and is infinitely well pleased with him. Through him he is gracious to all who come in this appointed way. Christ "is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him." Heb. vii. 25. In his "favour is life." Psalm xxx. 5. "His loving-kindness is better than life." Psalm lxiii. 3. By Christ, then, I gain the light of God's countenance, and the joy of his salvation.

It is A LIFE OF JUSTIFICATION. The removal of the guilt of sin ; the happiness of being accounted righteous before God, and of having nothing between God and our souls, is a blessedness unspeakably great. Psalm xxxii. 1, 2. It gives us a guileless, free, and happy spirit with God. Now in the glorious gospel of Christ we learn, that "by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life ;" we learn too that "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." By Christ, then, we have the life of justification ; we are brought, sinful as we are, into a state of righteousness before God : yes, are "made the righteousness of God in him."

It is a LIFE OF ADOPTION. We are brought into the relation of children. God, our own God, has a father's heart towards us, and we have the spirit of adoption, crying to him, Abba, Father. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." For this end he redeemed us "that we might receive the adoption of sons, and walk in the liberty, and confidence, and happiness of the children of the living God, all our days.

It is A LIFE OF SANCTIFICATION, or holiness; this flows from the foregoing characters of this life. "The just live by faith." Rom. i. 17. "I am," says St. Paul, "crucified to the world : nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth

in me. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." This life of holiness consists in inward conformity to God's holy will, crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts, and an outward walking according to the varied directions of his holy word.

It is a LIFE OF JOY. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." God has provided largely for our happiness in the gospel of his Son. When Christ comes into your heart, and dwells there by faith, then comes joy, yes, "great joy." Acts viii. 8. To be *glad* and to *live* are joined together. Psalm lxix. 32. The joy that comes from our Lord Jesus Christ is the purest, fullest, and most enduring joy that an immortal being like man can possess. He receives the word "with joy of the Holy Ghost." 1 Thess. i. 6. He is filled with "all joy and peace in believing." Rom. xv. 13. The joy he has in the joy of his fellow-creatures is exceeding great —Phil. ii. 17, 18; 1 Thess. iii. 19; and the joy he has in his God is still greater. Psalm xvi. 11; xliii. 4. And the prospect before him of a heavenly inheritance enables him, in the midst of all present sufferings, to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

There is A LIFE OF GLORY also before us. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." This is the full maturity and perfection of grace. Grace is now like the sap or juice which a rose-plant draws up inwardly in the spring, with little appearance of life, but when the Sun of Righteousness shines forth in glory, it will be like the same plant in the summer, with all its foliage, and bearing the crowns of beautiful and fragrant flowers. How beautifully David says to his God, "All my springs are in thee." When Christians come to this fountain-head, it is promised "they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, they shall drink of the rivers of thy pleasure; for with thee is the fountain of life, and in thy light shall we see light." Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9.

Whence, then, arises this wonderful change in him who is by nature dead in trespasses and sins ? All men through love of sin, reject the gospel, and if left to themselves must perish in this rejection. " If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world (even Satan) hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

But our God will not thus be frustrated in his love to men. He has provided in the plan of redemption for this deeper wretchedness of man, under the blaze of so much light and love, by still farther depths and heights of loving-kindness. He chooses and singles out of mankind, thus rebellious, as he will, and whom he will, to make them vessels of mercy for his own glory, their salvation, and the final blessedness of our earth.

How, then, do we obtain this life ? Christ is the giver of it, Christ is the way to it, Christ is the substance of it, Christ is the end of it. " For to me to live is Christ." Phil. i. 21. " In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. 1 John iv. 9. Baptism is the outward and visible sign of this inward and spiritual grace, a means whereby we receive the " same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." The new birth of the Spirit is the real beginning of this change. John iii. 3—5.

It is by believing and realizing God's love to us in Christ that we live. John iii. 16. It is by applying to ourselves what Christ has done in our nature, and as our head and representative, that we in spirit partake now of his life. " God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Prayer for Spiritual Life.

My soul cleaveth unto the dust : O Lord, quicken thou

me according to thy word ! Author and giver of spiritual life, quicken me for thy name's sake ! Impart unto me thy Holy Spirit, that my soul may live, and I may praise thee ! Thou hast called me to this life, thou hast assured me, O divine Redeemer, that thou camest into the world that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. Thou sayest, Ask, and ye shall have : O Lord Jesus, give unto my soul this spiritual life which thou hast for me. O thou, who hast given grace to desire it, give me the blessing thou disposest me to ask, that I too may tell of this life to others, and they may share it with me for ever, to the glory of thy name.

4. THE RECEIVING OF CHRIST JESUS.

Knowledge of God is the first step we make to real holiness and happiness. " Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches ; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

To gain this knowledge it is all-essential that we receive the Lord Jesus, as revealed in the word of God, into our hearts. Here was the great error of the Jewish nation. " He came unto his own, and his own received him not." Here was the great blessedness of the " remnant according to the election of grace." They did really receive him as the true Messiah ; as their Prophet, Priest, and King. " As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

This receiving of Christ is believing the plain testimony of God concerning him, being fully persuaded of the truth of God's precious promises to us and to all men in Christ Jesus, embracing them with the heart, and so rejoicing in him as our complete Saviour, confessing him with the

mouth, and living as strangers and pilgrims on earth, that we may reign with him in glory.

It is not that God requires me to believe certain truths, difficult to reason, or above reason, that by overcoming this difficulty I may be entitled to pardon and salvation : God deals not in this way with any man. His service is a reasonable service, as well as perfect freedom. But God having made perfectly clear, by its own bright light and holy love, to every conscience not wilfully blinded through the love of sin, the truth and reality as well as the glory and excellence of his word, does require all men to believe it, by his divine authority and positive command. " This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ."

And the nature of the truth to be believed is so pure and heavenly, a seed of such power and influence, that it cannot be truly known and received into the heart without the most blessed and mighty effects. " Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren ; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

It has a quickening, transforming, purifying effect upon our whole souls ; when giving up our self-wisdom and self-will to the infallible wisdom and holy will of God, we yield a joyful and entire confidence to truth so full of holy love, as is divine truth.

But let us proceed more fully to illustrate the receiving of Christ as our life. The apostle dwells at some length on this. (Col. ii.) After directing us to " walk in Christ Jesus " as we have " received " him, and shewing the danger of philosophy and vain deceit, and the fulness of his Godhead, he says, " Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power." He then shews how baptism, " the circumcision without hands," introduces us

to this union with him ; that is, the eompleted act of baptism, not merely the washing with water by the appointed minister, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost also. He further states that we are "buried with him in baptism, wherein also we are risen with him through faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead."

Baptism is the outward sign of our receiving Christ, and being made one with him. It is also more than the outward sign ; it is the means and the pledge. Designed by God to teach us the truth of our being washed from our sins in the blood of Jesus, and sanctified by the power of his Spirit ; and designed also as his appointment to impart to us that faith and graee by which a real spiritual life may be begun or eontinued in us.

All baptized Christians have professedly received Christ ; by faith this becomes a reality ; but unbelief makes it not only void, but an awful apostacy and an aggravated eondemnation. Oh it is fearful to think what multitudes of professing Christians are now in this state, "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof ! "

Prayer for grace to receive Christ as our Life.

Almighty Father, who so loved the world that thou sparedst not thine own Son, but delivered him up for us all, and thereby dost assure us thou wilt with him freely give us all things, open, I entreat thee, my eyes to see, open my heart to embrace this thy great love. Oh let not the god of this world blind my mind through my unbelief, but give me the precious gift of faith to believe in the name of Jesus, and rejoiee in his grace. Lord Jesus, come and dwell in my heart by faith, that I may be rooted and grounded in love. O Holy Ghost, direet my heart into the love of God. O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, quieken me and raise me to sit together with him in heavenly places, for his name's sake.

5. THE RISEN LIFE ON EARTH.

It is perfectly clear that the scriptures consider the real

life of a Christian to be something far superior to a mere moral course of good conduct, and to outward actions of piety and devotion. His life includes all that, and with that he is called, as his happiness and privilege, to do more than others.

The apostle dwells at length on this in the sixth chapter to the Romans. Read that chapter, with prayer to be led into "this newness of life," and being planted "in the likeness of his resurrection," and into "being dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The risen life on earth of the real Christian, hidden now from the world, will all be manifested in that quickly coming day when our Lord appears : "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory." This is the great hope of the gospel : but before that day there is an earnest and foretaste of its joys ; there is a real life and blessedness now to be received and enjoyed. What is the nature of this risen life ? By what is it distinguished from the natural life which all men enjoy ? Let us view it in its description as a resurrection.

1st. View this resurrection AS IT REGARDS ALL MEN. There is a resurrection with Christ as THE LORD FROM HEAVEN appearing in our nature, who for all men died and rose again. Adam was "the figure of him that is to come, in his representative character. Our Lord Christ is "the second man, the last Adam," who was made "a quickening spirit." Thus the apostle contrasts the two. "As by the offence of one man, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Again, also, he tells the Corinthians, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Here is that general redemption which Christ has provided for the whole race of man, and which enables ministers, with a full remedy, to go into all the world, and preach the good tidings to every human being.

2nd. View this farther in its application personally to A RESURRECTION IN SPIRIT TO ALL BELIEVERS. There is a resurrection with Christ, as our HEAD, which is peculiar to his people; he is called "the first-born among many brethren." Again it is said, "By him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead." Every believer has spiritually a participation of those acts which Christ in his body went through for us. Was he circumcised in the flesh? "we are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Was he crucified on the tree? we also are crucified with him—"they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." Did he suffer? we are called to the fellowship of his sufferings: "Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, for he that suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." His acts are the very model, VISIBLY, of what Christians have to go through and experience SPIRITUALLY. "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." The apostle very remarkably opens this in his prayer for the Ephesians. He asks that God would "give unto them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:" he then shews them "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," the mighty power by which he was raised from the dead at God's own right hand in the heavenly places, and after many glowing expressions, full of heavenly feeling, he comes to shew that "God has quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

My heart almost sinks within me in speaking of these things; in the feeling conviction that I and my fellow-Christians fall far below all these privileges. Our souls cleave so much to the dust that we can hardly raise our thoughts to this which ought to be our daily life. All our

affections and strongest feelings should be with our dear Redeemer in his glory. Just as the affections of a beloved absent child are with the parent, and the parent's with the child, so should be the state of feeling between our souls and that loving Saviour whose heart is always with us to do us good. In spirit we should be risen with him, and setting our affections constantly on things above.

Hence there is a HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP. "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." We belong not to earth which, in its present polluted and sinful state, is soon to pass away, and it and all its works to be burned up. "Our conversation," or citizenship, "is in heaven. We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle fail, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We are not now foreigners to heavenly things, but foreigners to earthly things. Our chief relations and connections now are no longer with that which belongs entirely to this earth and its vanities, but with that which belongs to the heavenly kingdom of our Redeemer. There is our home, there our best friends are gone, or going : there is our richest treasure and our highest joy. How triumphantly the apostle speaks of this as the PRESENT character of the believer in the true enjoyment of his real privileges : "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Meditation.

Oh for grace to rise to this heavenly life on earth ! How precious, how valuable, such grace must be ! Lord, teach me to prize it and to seek it above every thing else, and willingly to part with other things, that I may win Christ, and be found in him.

6. THE POWER BY WHICH THIS LIFE IS SUSTAINED.

Mysterious and hidden as is the life of the Christian in the eyes of the world, there is an adequate power for its maintenance. We have seen that it pleases God first to impart this life in the new birth of the Spirit, pointed out in baptism, which is also God's means of grace for our obtaining it, when received in faith and duly improved. God has also provided outward means and inward and effective power for maintaining this life.

Various are the outward means. I will notice two, the word of God and the Lord's Supper. The WORD OF GOD is the means by which we are first begotten, and by which also we are afterwards nourished unto everlasting life. When the Israelites were fed with manna in the wilderness, the design was to make them know "that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

THE LORD'S SUPPER is an ordinance specially connected with the maintenance of spiritual life. It is the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace. It is also a means whereby we are assured of its reality and blessedness, and whereby our souls are actually refreshed, when truly believing in the grace given in that ordinance. Our Saviour dwells at much length, in the sixth of John, on that feeding on Christ in our hearts by faith, of which the feeding on bread and wine, the symbols of his body and blood, is the sign, and the means, and the pledge.

The inward and EFFECTIVE POWER is the Holy Ghost, which our risen and interceding Saviour has obtained in our behalf, and bestows on all who come to him. Wonderful is the difference between the outward means only, and the outward means made effective by the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul clearly shews, telling the Thessalonians, "Our gospel came unto you not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

But still Christ is the giver of the Holy Ghost. He has

received for us, and he bestows on us sinners this divine gift. For this end he ascended in our nature, and, seated at the right hand of God, " he ever liveth to make intercession for us." He tells us what the great subject of his intercession is, when he says, " I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth."

See then, Christian reader, how there is provided for you in him, who has loved you even unto death, every thing that you can possibly need for your great and urgent necessities ; life and the means of life. It is a day of rich grace and abounding loving-kindness. But the very reality and extent of this grace makes it unspeakably important that you should not trifle with it.

" Deadness of spirit and want of spiritual activity is very inexcusable in a believer. Christ has life enough for him, and he is willing enough to communicate more and more of this spiritual life : if the fountain of life were a mere creature, something might be said for our deadness and coldness : but now seeing Jesus Christ is our life, our deadness is inexcusable to ourselves, and dishonourable to Christ. The life and fruitfulness of the branches is the glory of the tree ; and spiritual fruitfulness in a believer is an honour to Jesus Christ. We see (Psalm xcii. 12—15.) that the righteous flourish, to shew that the Lord is upright. The fulness of Christ is manifested by the fruitfulness of a Christian."

When Moses had set before the Israelites the glorious doctrine of God's love to them, and his gracious designs for their happiness, he told them " the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it ;" assuring them that it was not in the inaccessible heavens, or beyond the distant seas, but close to them and ready for them ; he also immediately added, " See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil."

Thus, Christian reader, the blessed life of the Christian, has been also set before YOU, along with that awful and spiritual death in which all men are by nature sunk,

and from which, if not raised in the day of grace, you are ripening for the second death. The second death has power on those who have no part in the first resurrection. How forcibly are these things set before us in the words of Moses to Israel! "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life and the length of thy days."

There are ten thousand ways by which Satan seeks to turn men's attention from these great and everlasting concerns. What he seeks is to keep you in blindness, that you may be in entire captivity to him, to your everlasting destruction. But will you believe the father of lies, before the God of truth—the murderer from the beginning, before the Father of mercies? Oh, listen to your heavenly Parent! Search the scriptures whether these things are not so. Pray for divine teaching, that the veil may be removed from your hearts, and the glorious light of the gospel may shine upon you.

All things pertaining to life and godliness are through the great power and love of God given to you in Christ Jesus. In this day of grace, while the accepted time continues, believe the love of God, be reconciled to him on whom you wholly depend, receive his abundant grace and gift of righteousness provided for you, and though death has reigned by one, even the first Adam, you shall reign in life by one, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast ascended up on high, who hast received gifts for the rebellious, even such as I have been, who invitest all to come to thee, and castest out none that come, behold me now at thy mercy-seat, asking for that most precious gift which thou hast so freely promised,

saying, Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Give me, even me, this thy Spirit, that I may know the things freely given me of God, that I may rejoice in thy loving-kindness, and from my own happiness tell others what great things thou hast done for me, and call them to turn unto thee the only Saviour and Redeemer, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory evermore.

CHAPTER X.

CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES.

1. The outward state of the Christian—2. His varied spiritual state—3. His ordinary privileges in this life—4. His special privileges—5. His hope of future glory—6. The communication of these privileges—7. The effect of them.

1. THE OUTWARD STATE OF A CHRISTIAN.

THE outward condition of a Christian partakes of all the varied circumstances of our fallen race. There is no lawful situation in which a Christian may not prosper and adorn the gospel, from the highest to the lowest. Like David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, he may reign as a righteous king; like the blind man, he may be a beggar by the way-side. Like Abraham, he may be very rich; like the poor widow, he may have but a single farthing. Like Moses, he may have vigorous health, even in old age, "his eye not dim, nor his natural force abated;" or, like Gaius, he may be sick, or, as Lazarus was, he may be full of sores, and die in poverty and affliction. In these outward circumstances "all things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the evil; to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath."

But his spirit being different from the spirit of the world, through the abounding grace given to him; this makes a prodigious difference, in all these circumstances, between him and the man walking after the course of this world.

First, he sees that all things are divinely ordered and appointed in infinite wisdom and love. "Promotion cometh neither from the east nor the west, nor from the north or the south ; but God is the Judge, he putteth down one and setteth up another. Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. And this is not a mere fact of sovereignty and power, but there is a special appointment of holy love and heavenly wisdom, designing in all things the highest good of him who believes in the Lord. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand."

This at once changes the character of every situation to the Christian. He sees, that if he has power and authority, talents or knowledge, entrusted to him, they are given that he may be a minister of God to others for good, and thus he is preserved from the intoxicating spirit of eminent station. If he be left in poverty and affliction, he is assured that it is only that he may the more glorify God in them, and have a fuller reward hereafter ; "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Infirmity itself thus changes to him its very nature. The grace of Christ imparted with it, and his strength made perfect in our weakness, the mature Christian can say, "Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me ; therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake : for when I am weak then am I strong."

In all outward things, then, there may be great similarity between the state of the righteous and the wicked ; or even the afflictions of the righteous may be many, and abound : the real difference here is in the spirit in which events are received. This makes that which is peculiarly the subject of God's commendation or condemnation, the inward character of a man, of such immense importance. This is what may be attended to by us in all situations, what may

make us miserable or happy in all circumstances; what leaves the wicked without excuse from their fancied difficulties of serving God; for it will be found in the day of Christ that others in the self-same difficulties have served the Lord, and have been happy in his service. Thus the gospel gives us to be blessed now, however we may be situated, as well as blessed for ever. See in the beatitudes (Matt. v. 1—12.) in what consists the true description of privileges and blessings: inward poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, being merciful, pure in heart, and a peacemaker, and even in being persecuted for righteousness' sake! To see this indeed requires us to know and believe God's word, and to prefer the truth set before us by that word to our own carnal wisdom. Hence faith is the very root and spring of all right views, and the most important of all graces in gaining heavenly wisdom.

Well has the poet Cowper expressed the privileges even in this life of him who receives the truth of God:

> 'He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
> And all are slaves beside. There's not a chain
> That hellish foes, confederate for his harm,
> Can wind around him, but he casts it off
> With as much ease as Samson his green withes.
> He looks abroad into the varied field
> Of nature, and though poor perhaps compared
> With those whose mansions glitter in his sight,
> Calls the delightful scenery all his own.
> His are the mountains, and the vallies his,
> And the resplendent rivers; his to enjoy
> With a propriety that none can feel,
> But who with filial confidence inspired,
> Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
> And smiling say, 'My Father made them all.'
> Are they not his by a peculiar right,
> And by an emphasis of interest his,
> Whose eye they fill with tears of holy joy,
> Whose heart with praise; and whose exalted mind
> With worthy thoughts of that unwearied love
> That planned and built, and still upholds a world
> So clothed with beauty, for rebellious man?'

Prayer to look at things unseen.

O my God, who hast made all things, and didst design every thing for thy glory, and to be a means of good to those that serve thee, I pray thee that I may so trust in and love thee, that all things may work together for my good ; that I may so look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen, that the light and momentary afflictions of this life may never cast me down in despondency, but work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. THE VARIED SPIRITUAL STATE OF A CHRISTIAN.

The scriptures speak very highly of the believer's present state. Many and precious are the names by which he is called : elect, holy, beloved, a son of God, his heir, his house, a king and priest unto God, the light of the world, and the salt of the earth ; these are only some of the titles by which he is distinguished from others.

The source of all his blessedness is the free love of his heavenly Father. "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

We shall have a clearer view, however, of this state, and of his rich privileges in it, if we remember that the scriptures distinguish between different stages of the Christian life. There is not only the natural man, who neither receives nor knows the things of God ; but there is also the man who is comparatively carnal, and only a babe in Christ ; and the spiritual man, who discerneth all things, yet is himself discerned of no man. St. John distinguishes Christians into three classes ; little children, young men, and fathers. Our Lord compares also the kingdom of God to seed in the ground : "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

Let us, then, view these privileges in their varied states. The apostle first states the general privilege of ALL Christians, as children. "Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." This belongs to all, without exception, even to the youngest in the school of Christ. It is the doctrine of his forgiving love that does indeed especially attract and win the soul. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Christ dying for our sins; redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace; this is the all-powerful and invincible truth that stamps infamy on sin, loveliness on holiness, and leads the soul to delight in God. This is to be declared first of all; and this fills the child of God, apprehending it by faith, with joy and peace in believing.

The direct and immediate privilege of LITTLE CHILDREN in the gospel (the word translated children is different in verse 13 from that in verse 12) is "knowledge of the Father." The natural view men have of God is that of severity and hardness, gendering bondage: one of the first blessings that we gain by the gospel is to see that God's name is love, and receiving the spirit of adoption, to be enabled to cry to him "Abba, Father." The sweetness of filial confidence and affection, the delight of looking to the great God with reverential freedom and love is here intimated. What tongue can tell the light, and peace, and joy, and love to be found in the knowledge of him, in whose presence is fulness of joy.

The privileges of the YOUNG MEN are threefold, all implying establishment in the ways of Christ. First, they are "strong;" settled and established: the little children are liable to be carried about with every wind of doctrine: being confident in their own strength they are especially exposed to danger; but the young having been taught their own weakness by sad experience, and where their true strength lies, are "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might," and thus are saved from many temptations by which they might fall. Their conscious weakness becomes real strength. "The word of God" also "abideth in them."

It is comparatively but little of that heavenly treasure that the babe in Christ has received. The young man having found its value as a light to his feet, a two-edged sword for his arm, an unfailing treasure to enrich his soul, a sure and perfect guide in all his difficulties, meditates more constantly on it ; he desires to fulfil the direction, "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all spiritual wisdom and understanding." The privilege is of this character, walking in a way difficult to find, in the full light of the sun, rather than with the glimmering taper of man's making ; with a growing assurance that we are in the right path. Once more, young men "have overcome the wicked one." Satan easily beguiles a babe with fancied good, and easily stumbles him with manifested evil. It is not so with the young man. "For every one that useth milk" merely, "is unskilful," or unexperienced, "in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe ; but strong meat," the word of God in its deeper and fuller truths, "belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Hence he knows how to wield the sword of the spirit, and resisting the devil by prayer and the word of God, gains the victory again and again. The wiliness of the serpent, and the roar of the lion, are equally unavailing to overthrow him who takes the divinely-provided armour for his defence and his warfare. The privilege here is, not merely security from our spiritual enemies, but also victory over them.

We come, lastly, to the privilege of the FATHERS. Their peculiar privilege is, indeed, but one ; but that one is all in all, and therefore it is repeated by the apostle, as really comprehending every thing. "Ye have known him that is from the beginning." He had commenced his epistle with thus describing Jesus, the word of life, manifested to men, that they might have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Oh how precious it is to see that Christ is the sum of saving knowledge ! Hence, advanced as the Ephesians were, the apostle's prayer was

that they might "be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." There are "unsearchable riches of Christ," and on them the mature Christian meditates; by these he is daily enriched and made happy. He has been compelled by his varied necessities, falls, conflicts, sorrows and perplexities, to make use of Christ in all his offices, and he has found a fulness in him suited to all his wants. To him Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending; the full rest of his soul; his joy and strength, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Prayer for growth in grace.

O my heavenly Father, who has opened in thy word such boundless treasures of grace for thy people, I entreat Thee to multiply upon me thy grace and peace. Let me never be content with the mere name of Christian, or rest satisfied in present attainments; but feeling my great spiritual poverty and necessities, and the riches of thy grace, and the freedom of thy love, may I covet earnestly the best gifts, and seek daily to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, and to comprehend more with all thy saints that breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fulness of God. Hear me speedily, and answer me for my Redeemer's sake.

3. HIS ORDINARY SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES.

The Christian here is in a school in which he is training up for his father's house, "and differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all" through that divine Redeemer, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, "but he is under tutors and governors, till the time appointed of his Father." Many tokens of parental love he receives, but he has not yet reached his Father's house: many an earnest, many a foretaste and token, he has of parental love,

—but he has still to address him, as "Our Father which art in heaven," and has not the privilege yet of seeing him face to face, with whom he is to dwell for ever.

But what are his ordinary spiritual privileges? You will find a most glowing and enlivening statement of them in the first part of the Epistle to the Ephesians. What a rich enumeration of privileges and blessings are there set before us, beginning with that triumphant summary of the whole in praise to the great Giver! "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."

What amazing privileges are here set before us! How should they excite in us ardent desires after the full blessedness of the Christian! The church of England sets them before us in these words: "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity."

The happiness to which they are called is nothing less than to share in God's own happiness; they are said to be "heirs of God:" the expression is remarkable. God

himself their ultimate possession; thus David writes, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot." How great and good, then, the godly man's portion! He has the fulness of God's wisdom, power, love, riches, presence, and glory, to make him for ever happy. He is invited to cast all his cares on him that careth for him, and to pour out every desire into his Father's bosom. God in his providence governs all things for the final blessedness of those who trust in him and are upright with him. In God there is all the Almighty Father, as a friend, a sun, and a shield; there is all the divine Saviour, our light and our life; our Head and our Brother; our King and our Husband; there is all the Holy Spirit as Guide and Sanctifier, imparting to us truth and holiness, comfort and conformity to God, and that for ever and ever.

To enter into the full description of the Christian's privileges would be to transcribe the Bible; for the Bible is the book of Christian privileges. All its history; all its threatenings, all its warnings, and all its precepts, all its types, all its predictions, as well as all its doctrines and its promises, are the records of a Christian's mercies and blessings; so that we must say of all, whether "things present or things to come, all are your's, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Study well the three first chapters of the Ephesians if you would understand the full privileges of a child of God. See the present blessings how great they are, and then remember that they are both the seal and the earnest of our future inheritance.

Meditation.

And are such rich privileges set before me in the Word of God? And why are they there exhibited? Surely to excite my desire after them; to lead me to prize them, and to seek them in God's appointed way. And is there a possibility of my attaining them? Assuredly there is not only this possibility, but an absolute certainty; if I seek I shall find. Nay, it is inexcusable folly, self-destruction,

and most horrible wickedness, if I refuse God's gracious invitation, and neglect so great salvation. God himself testifies : " Turn you at my reproof : behold I will pour my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you." Let me turn, then, away at once from all other attractions that this vain world presents, and with my whole heart turn to him who thus invites me.

4. HIS SPECIAL PRIVILEGES.

When a beloved child is suffering pain, its mother redoubles her care, tenderness, and affection, and pays more attention to that child than to all her other children ; when that child is young, and helpless, and feeble, it occupies special consideration and care. So it is with Christians. THE TIME OF AFFLICTION IS THE TIME ordinarily of special CONSOLATION. It is the title which our heavenly Parent takes to himself : " God who comforteth those who are cast down." It is not indeed, always the time of SENSIBLE comfort. The Son of God himself in the midst of his deepest woe on the cross had to say, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ; " but in such a case there is a special secret support giving strength to carry the soul through all the season of temptation, and make it finally and eminently blessed through the fiery trial : so that " the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." There are special blessings, also, in the season of affliction. Christian knowledge is enlarged, patience has its perfect work, humility is deepened, experience grows mature, the vessel of mercy becomes capable, if we may say so, of containing larger and fuller treasures of grace and love, conformity to God is promoted, and our future glory is greatly increased.

Disappointment of worldly plans, loss of property, reputation, and even of dear relatives and friends, the failure of our fairest earthly prospects, may all be tokens for good ; each may in its gracious design and tendency be the very

kindest thing God could do to us, and thus afflictions themselves become privileges. Do we count it a privilege when ill, to have the most skilful physician, even though his medicine be distasteful, and his remedies painful? It is only a part of the process needful to our perfect cure. Let us, then, by faith realize the blessed truth that though affliction is not pleasant but grievous, it is in truth sent in love, and really works for good to those who see God's hand and love in it. Be sure of the skill and love of your soul's Physician.

And if this be true of all the sufferings through which the Christian passes, it is yet farther, and in a higher sense true of SUFFERING FOR CHRIST'S SAKE. Very plainly does our Lord state this as the last, and as it were the highest of the beatitudes of his people: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven." And very clearly does the apostle state this to be a peculiar privilege of specially-favoured disciples: "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Were, indeed, our faith to rise more to the contemplation of things unseen, and to the coming kingdom and glory, we should see that reproach, and distresses, and afflictions for Christ's sake, which can only be endured in the short season of this life, will furnish so many bright jewels of glory in that crown of life which the redeemed will hereafter wear. We should enter more into that just estimate to which the apostle comes when he says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." O Christian reader, let us have faith in God's promises, and have respect to the recompense of reward. Let us be bold in confessing our Redeemer before men. It may be very distasteful and unwelcome to men now, but many a soul may thus be gained for Christ, who shall be your joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of his appearing. Far better is it to be reproached now by men with every odious name, for fidelity to Christ, than to be

numbered among those of whom he says, " Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and his Father's, and with the holy angels." Yes, rather let us so confess him now in the midst of his enemies, that many of those enemies may be won to his kingdom, and he may confess us before his Father in heaven.

But there are privileges belonging not only to the afflicted, but also to the MATURE CHRISTIAN. There is a ripeness and maturity of grace set before us in the word of God. It is clear that we are encouraged to seek the attainment of this character in the Christian life. The apostle says, " We speak wisdom among them that are perfect." He tells the Ephesians that the ministry is given that we may " come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." It is still a growing state. " Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

For this state strong meat is provided. " Strong meat belongeth unto them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." There is a growing knowledge of divine truth, and an enlarged insight into the fulness of the scriptures. There is a " perfect love that casteth out fear ;" there is a special witness of the Spirit to those in this state. " The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God ; and if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

It is the higher stage of Christian experience and blessedness, with which God rewards his faithful people, that we ought to press after ; like Thyatira, let our " last work be more than the first." Oh let us be assured there is a fulness of reward and blessedness in the gospel far beyond any which we have yet reached. Let the apostolic exhor-

tation quicken all our diligence. " Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

Even then in this life there is a fulness and maturity of Christian privilege after which we should seek. " Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing.

How extensive is the influence of an established Christian, who by his good conversation in Christ has put to shame the false accusations of the wicked, and lived down, if we may so say, the prejudices and calumnies with which he was assailed in his earlier years ! What honour God puts upon such a character by making him widely useful! We have seen in our own country again and again that " the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."

Meditation.

Let me count the cost well. Suffering is the portion of God's most faithful and favoured people. Let me not expect an easy and quiet course in the straight and narrow path. Friends and relatives, my carnal heart, and an ensnaring world and Satan, full of malignity, will strive with mighty power against the life of faith. But look to the joyful close ; look to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and be content, O my soul, to suffer now and reign then.

5. THE FUTURE HOPE OF THE CHRISTIAN.

While we have seen that the Christian has a real though spiritual blessedness in this life, it is the future glory revealed to the eye of faith which truly makes this powerful and effectual to his present happiness, so that the apostle says, when he is about to describe the full glory of the resurrection, " if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." It is the sure hope of glory that

is the anchor within the vail, and the helmet of salvation in the day of battle.

The Christian is day by day advancing towards the enjoyment of his great hope; he is more preparing for it, and he has brighter and clearer evidence from growing simplicity of faith in the truth of God's word, that this hope is well-founded.

What, then, is the hope of the Christian? To see this we must consider what is clearly revealed in God's word. It is plain from that word that the present state of things is temporary; "the world passeth away and the lust thereof." It is plain that the present time is a day of grace and not a day of judgment; sinners are not immediately punished, but endured with much long-suffering. It is farther plain that a day of judgment is soon coming, when each must give account of himself to God, and the wicked go away into everlasting punishment. Now the Christian having been awakened to his true state as a sinner, and led in this day of salvation to the throne of grace, has there obtained mercy and found grace to help in time of need. He has fled to Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come; and in whom whosoever believes shall not perish, but have everlasting life, and through Christ he has obtained those blessings which we have already noticed.

His hope is then to be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. "For the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, and before him shall be gathered all nations." His hope is to be accepted in that day, and not only accepted, but to share its full bliss and glories, including an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Let us survey this hope in some of its parts. There is, first, THE RETURN OF OUR REDEEMER to our world; and that is so leading a part, that the Christian is now said to be "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus

Christ. What can be more delightful to him who feels that he owes the escaping of all evil, and the obtaining of every good, present or to come, to the love of Christ, than the sure hope of his return, "whom having not seen we love, and in whom, though now we see him not, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory?" What will it be with all our fellow-saints, who with us have been waiting for him, to welcome, with united songs of glory, his appearing, and to sit down at his table in his kingdom!

Another part of this hope is OUR OWN GLORIOUS RESURRECTION. Now our citizenship is in heaven, but that heavenly citizenship is yet in faith, hope, and love; it is a spiritual glory undiscerned by the natural eye, but it is to be revealed at the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven, "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself." O the poor vanity of man, in his humiliation bedecking himself with titles and ribands, and outward show and splendour, and these things filling his heart with exultation and glorying! It is but a mock aspiring after the glory to come, leaving us vain and empty. O the solid weight of glory preparing for the believer, when he shall have his body raised spiritual, incorruptible, and celestial, in power and glory; when he shall be remembered with the favour God bears to his people, and numbered with that blessed company who having been wise here, shall then "shine as the brightness of the firmament," and having turned many to righteousness here, shall then have an unfading glory "as the stars for ever and ever!" This part of our hope includes not only a body free from all weakness, sickness, and decay, and infirmity of every kind; no sun to smite them, no heat to oppress them, no frost to benumb them; neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain; but in the place of all this the healing of all evil, songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; every faculty, every sense, every member of the glorified body, perfectly

and joyfully exerted to magnify the great God. With this the soul will be perfectly renewed after the divine image, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Oh what holiness and righteousness, what wisdom and meekness, what tenderness and compassion, what forbearance and long-suffering, what patience and heavenly-mindedness shone in our Redeemer! We shall bear this image and likeness.

But why will all this be needed? Consider yet more the GLORIOUS KINGDOM they will possess. The people of Christ are to be made by him "kings and priests unto God and his Father;" and made "unto our God kings and priests, we shall reign on the earth." Crowns of life, and righteousness, and glory are promised to them; cities are to be subject to them. "The people of the saints of the Most High" shall have given to them "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven." All their present sufferings, all the growing maturity of their character have an important relation to their future sovereignty, just as the burial of the seed in the earth, to its subsequent rising from the ground and future fruitfulness. There is yet farther ITS EVERLASTING DURATION. Express is the testimony of Daniel: the kingdom of the Most High "is an everlasting kingdom, the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever and ever." Equally express is the testimony of St. John: "The Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." And most solemn is the assurance of our Lord, that, after the judgment, the wicked "go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Glory everlasting, dominion without end, sovereignty in perpetuity, is provided then for all God's children; this is their exalted, and final, and full privilege. The immortal spirit can only be satisfied with eternal blessedness, and this God has promised, and this is the full hope we should have. Indeed how remarkable it is that the apostle places that strong statement of insult and mockery put by unbelief upon

God, of calling him a liar, on this ground, " not believing the record that God gave of his Son ; " and in that record makes the sum of the testimony to be this, " God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Dear readers, we call you, whoever you are, to believe then this amazing love of God ; to lay aside all your enmity against him, and all your unbelief of his truth ; to repent of all your hard and wicked thoughts of God, and give him glory by believing his loving-kindness to your soul.

Meditation.

And is there such a bright hope of glory yet to come, and yet attainable ? O sluggish, earthly-minded soul, why art thou thus cleaving to the dust ! Why art thou not having thy conversation continually in heaven, full of these joyful prospects. If hope be the helmet of thy salvation, how canst thou lift up thy head against thy enemies without it ? If hope be the anchor of thy soul, how canst thou in all the tempests of life be sure and stable, and unmoveable, while this anchor is unused, and thy hope has not yet entered within the vail ? Lord, give me the hope of thy glory, even a good hope through grace.

6. THE CONFERRING OF THESE PRIVILEGES.

If such be the high and glorious privileges, how are they to be obtained ? how are they communicated to us ? It is a question of immense importance, and very clear is the answer given to us in the word of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ, that he might procure them all for us, took upon him our nature. " Great is the mystery of godliness ; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Thus in our nature was seen one perfectly holy and obedient to the law of God ; he fulfilled that law in every particular ; he atoned for all our transgressions, taking away the curse

of the law by being made a curse for us, and now by him who is God and man, human nature "is justified in the spirit," and righteous before God. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The beginning and the sum of all is the gift of Christ for us sinners. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." In this gift is included all other gifts, but more especially the most precious gifts to us sinners, the Holy Spirit and eternal life. O that we did but ask for knowledge of these things! Our Saviour told the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God," that precious gift his only Son, "thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living waters," even the Divine Spirit. In the same gift of Christ, eternal life is also bestowed upon us: "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life."

These privileges and blessings are in Christ Jesus for the use of our fallen race, as in a treasury to which all are invited to come. If any come not, the fault is wholly in themselves, "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." If any come, the praise is wholly to be ascribed to God, who draws them by his grace. "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." The Saviour freely invites the whole human race: he is sincere in the declaration of his love to all; he directs his ministers to preach the good tidings to every creature, and "whosoever will, may take of the water of life freely." Christian reader, despise not all this grace: now in this accepted time and in this day of salvation be ye reconciled to God, who shews such love to you as passes knowledge. The Holy Spirit himself will come to you with all-sufficient grace, through Jesus.

Do you say, How am I to receive these rich privileges? Simply by faith. Give God credit for the truth of his word. Believe that he has provided a Saviour for you, as he has again and again testified. Believe God's gracious

promise of his own Spirit. Believe that all these spiritual blessings are in Christ for you by God's appointment, as your God has again and again assured you. Receive freely the things freely given of God; "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." You must honour God's veracity before you can be healed by his truth. Faith is the spring both of holiness and of comfort. You will get neither while you refuse to venture your hope on the blessed word of Almighty God, and give way to those doubts and fears which in truth proceed from the enmity of a proud will, and the carnal lusts of an evil heart, and which are the grossest insult you can put on Him who is truth itself. But you say,—I still cannot remove those doubts, I see the excellence of the gospel, and long to live in its holy and happy light, but I feel a constant weakness and helplessness. And what Christian cannot sympathise with you, my reader? And what is the lesson? Let David speak it. Read the 62nd Psalm. Read the 130th Psalm. Wait, wait on the Lord. You will get strength there imperceptibly, perhaps, but really and efficaciously. None that ever waited patiently on the Lord were ashamed of their hope: in due time you will have to say, "In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God."

Prayer for a waiting spirit.

O thou who art the God of patience and consolation, and the giver of every good and perfect gift, draw my heart to thy Son Jesus Christ, give me to believe in his name; give me grace to wait for him, and so attain his salvation here and his glory hereafter. Hear, for his name's sake.

7. THE EFFECT OF CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES.

St John beautifully states this. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us

not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is ; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." Being made like Christ is the blessed consequence of Christian privileges. Being in our measure a blessing to others by self-sacrifice ; being meek, holy, humble, full of love, spiritual, pure, and heavenly-minded ; the very epistle of Christ written by the Spirit of the living God : nothing less than this is the holy and happy state to which gospel grace calls all its blessed receivers. See in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of Romans, to what a heavenly state of mind, and to what a pure, practical, and most holy life the mercies of God constrain the true Christian.

The gospel raises us far above all the petty, narrow, and grovelling objects of this world's ambition, such as to be great in the eyes of men, to have mere temporary pleasures of this life, or accumulate its riches. It sets us also, by its glorious and free salvation, at liberty from the slavish spirit of working out a righteousness by our own obedience, which we can never attain, and frees us from the mere selfish consideration of seeking our own safety by the strong consolation and the good hope through grace which it gives to all who have fled to Christ for refuge.

Thus we are free with the freedom which the Son of Man gives, to sow to the Spirit, to seek for glory, honour, and immortality : to labour for that crown of glory which is worthy of pursuit, saving the souls of our fellow men, and having the joy in the day of Christ of seeing countless numbers brought to him through our faithful love.

O see, Christian reader, if the love of Christ be not a more constraining, quickening, and ennobling principle, leading to more self-denial and more devotedness than any other ever presented to your mind. It is this wonderful love that makes us not to live to ourselves, but to him who died for us. Taste this love then. Pray that the Holy

Spirit may shed it abroad in your hearts, and live in its light and warmth all your days.

Prayer for the experience of Christian Privileges.

Almighty Father, give me, I beseech thee, eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand and embrace the great things which thou hast freely given to us in Christ Jesus. May I inherit that blessing of my Redeemer, Blessed are the eyes that see the things that you see, and the ears that hear the things that you hear. O may I know and believe the joyful sound, and find in my own heart and life all its purifying and heavenly power, through Jesus my Redeemer. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTIAN GRACES.

1. The sermon on the mount—2. The poor in spirit—3. They that mourn—4. The meek—5. The hungering and thirsting—6. The merciful—7. The pure in heart—8. The peace-makers.

1. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

THE graces of the Christian form a large and extensive subject that much exceeds the limits of this work. To give a brief account of them, the beatitudes with which our Lord commenced his sermon on the mount, and the tempers there commended and blessed, will alone be considered in this chapter.

This sermon contains, as it were, the royal constitution of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. It sets before us those graces and that character which are to be attained, and the conduct which is now to be followed, in order that we may be made meet to be "partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." It was given by our Lord, after he had chosen his apostles, at the commencement of his ministry, to great multitudes of people, who were gathered together to hear him. We have, then, in this discourse, the most solemn and important instruction as to the true nature of the gospel. The preparation had been made for this sermon by the previous ministry of John the Baptist. John the Baptist had been preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He had been warning the Pharisees and Sad-

ducees to "flee from the wrath to come," and had been proclaiming that the Lord would come, and that he would "burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Our Lord himself had been preaching throughout Galilee the same preparatory truth: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and had been proving his divine mission by healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

Attracted by his miracles, and awakened by his alarming doctrines, vast multitudes followed him, some to be healed of their diseases, and others to be farther instructed in the things of the kingdom of God. The ground had thus been ploughed up, and now our Lord casts in the precious seed of the word.

Our Lord begins this ministry of his gospel with blessings, as he closed all his labours on earth with a blessing. He came into the world to bless us; and the chief blessing, and one above all price, is that he "turns away every one of us," who look to him, "from all our iniquities." You will observe in this description, that happiness is made to consist in the right inward state of the mind. How merciful is this! outward circumstances we cannot command or controul, but the right inward state of the mind may be gained under any outward circumstances. The graces mentioned are not those which we by nature think most calculated to make us blessed; but they will be found to be so in the Christian's happy experience. They are not graces which we possess naturally, but they are the work of the divine Spirit in the heart. It is the voice of infinite wisdom, almighty power, and boundless love, that here speaks, and sets before us the true path of happiness; how gracious in our God to give us so pure and perfect a guide!

There are seven leading beatitudes. After stating these, our Lord describes the opposition which his followers meet with from the world, the happiness here and hereafter of the believer even amidst all his trials, and the happy influence of his character on others, as "the salt of the earth

and the light of the world." The beatitudes themselves are as follows :—" Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Meditation.

What a cluster of blessings, graces, and glories have we here set before us ! O that I did with full purpose of heart seek after these infinitely desirable gifts and benefits received through the gospel. Lord, open my eyes to see their spiritual beauty and desirableness, and to follow after Christ fully, and through him attain them.

2. THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

It is remarkable that the Lord begins the account of the graces of his people with this sense of their need of every grace. He shews that the root of all their happiness is in having their eyes opened to their real need, their emptiness of all good. Poverty of spirit is the feeling sense of utter want, and entire helplessness as to the soul.

Though this be our real state and condition before God, yet it is by no means the view which men have of themselves. Our natural views are self-complacent and self-sufficient ; and the light of the gospel does not of itself dispel this inward darkness of our minds ; thus it was said to the church of Laodicea, " Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The apostle had to tell the Galatians, " If a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." This is, indeed, a growing grace, and marks the servants of God in their best

estate ; thus Job at last confesses, "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee ; I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Isaiah, in a similar manner, is led to exclaim, "Woe is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips : " and St. Paul testifies, "In me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. I am the chief of sinners."

Christian reader, are you brought to this view of yourself? Have you been led to see that all these high notions of ourselves as being better than others, having superior wisdom, skill and management ; or having better conducted ourselves ; or that we should have done differently, if situated as others, really arise from pride and self-ignorance ; that we are "not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves ; our sufficiency is of God ;" that, if we differ at all from others, it is God only that makes us to differ, and we have nothing but what we have received? Christian reader, do you see that you cannot think a good thought, or will a holy purpose, or do a good work, if left to yourselves, according to the positive testimony of your Lord, "without me ye can do nothing?" And, in this sense of entire emptiness of all good, are you looking to Jesus, in whom all fulness dwells, and entering into David's feelings ; "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want?"

This is poverty of spirit ; and to this is annexed the promise, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That heavenly kingdom so much predicted in the Old Testament (Genesis xlix. 10. Psalm ii. 6—12 ; lxxii. ; lxxxix. 3, 4, 19—36 ; cx. 1—4. Isa. ix. 6, 7 ; xxxii. ; Dan. ii. 44 ; vii. 14, 18, 22, 27, &c. &c.) belongs to those thus empty of self. It is for the poor and needy ; it is for the sinful and guilty. The promises of it all belong to them ; the graces of it are for them ; the present sufferings of it are for them ; the future glory is for them. They have already been born again, an are renewed in spirit ; they are ready to welcome its varied truths, and they shall receive more and more of the divine Spirit, who delights to dwell in the humble and contrite heart.

The King of that kingdom is theirs to guide, govern, and bless them. "He is their hiding place from the wind, and their covert from the tempest." He is to them as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and as rivers of water in a dry place." He gives them already the earnest and foretaste of that kingdom in the righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, with which he fills their souls.

This poverty of spirit only takes from the soul the fancied riches of the maniac, to bestow upon it the real riches of the kingdom of heaven. Poverty of spirit deprives the soul of the deceitful vision of plenty, to bless it with the real provision for every want in time and through eternity, and so it is truly "blessed." Chrysostom, that father of the church, who has acquired the highest reputation for holy eloquence, says, 'Humility is the first lesson which our divine Legislator has given to men. It is with this that he opens his code of salvation: "Be ye poor in spirit." The architect who proposes to himself to raise a lofty and magnificent edifice, begins by laying the foundation in proportion. Such is the rule pursued by Jesus Christ; to the palace of the sublime philosophy he was about to introduce upon the earth, he gives humility for its base, well knowing that when once that virtue is thoroughly seated in the heart, all the others will come and range themselves around her. Vainly, on the contrary, might we seem without it to possess all the rest. We should soon find that we had been building on the sand, and labouring to no purpose.

Prayer for poverty of spirit.

O divine Redeemer, who becamest poor that I might be rich, I come to thee to have my eyes anointed with thy heavenly unction, that I may see my real spiritual poverty and necessity; my emptiness of all good, my exceeding sinfulness before God, and my utter helplessness in myself. Shew me to myself, that I may come to thee for that grace which thou hast in all fulness for all my wants. Amen and Amen.

3. THEY THAT MOURN.

When a man is led to see his own spiritual poverty, then he is prepared to go further, and mourn over not merely his emptiness of good, but his proneness to that which is evil, and his departure from the only good one, even the good and gracious Lord of all.

This is a very different thing from worldly sorrow. Though it often pleases God to bless the afflictions of this life to the spiritual good of his children ; yet this, through our corruption, is not the necessary effect of worldly sorrows—" the sorrow of the world worketh death." ' Who is it,' asks Hilary, an excellent father of the fourth century, and of the French church, ' that Jesus Christ thus promises to indemnify for their sorrows by endless consolation ? Not those who weep over the loss of their natural ties, or the calumnies to which they have been subjected, or the unjust treatment they may have received ; but those who weep on reflecting on the sins which they have committed.'

The mourning here pronounced to be blessed is a mourning for sin, a mourning after God, of which we have many sweet examples in the word of God. Thus the Israelites wept at Bochim. Judges ii. 5. Thus in the penitential Psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 103, 143) David mourns, and in other Psalms (such as the 42, 63, and 84) you see the holy longings of the soul after God. Isaiah describes the Lord as specially regarding such mourners : " Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever : I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners." We have a beautiful picture of Israel thus brought to godly sorrow. Jer. xxxi. 18—20. " I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastened me,

and I was chastened, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke ; turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned I repented : I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

The Holy Spirit uses varied and different means for bringing the Christian to this state. The majesty, holiness, and purity of God ; the goodness, spirituality, and extent of his law ; the real knowledge of ourselves and our past lives are important means ; but the chief and most efficacious is the death of our Lord Christ. " They shall look upon him whom they pierced, and mourn for him." It is this goodness of God that leads sinners to godly sorrow and lively repentance. One who believes in Christ " wounded for our transgressions," and bearing " our sins in his own body on the tree," is able to see in sin what others cannot. How vile, he says, must my sins be, which made it necessary for the holy God of love to send his own Son in my nature to die for me, before I could be delivered ! How abominable are hard thoughts of my God ! how evil my heart, that it should ever be alienated from such amazing love ! How detestable is sin, which leads me to depart from God and his word ! No where can we so weep for our sins as at the foot of the cross.

Nor any where else can we be so comforted. " They that sow in tears shall reap in joy ;" the very relentings and softenings of the hard heart, occasioned by the sight of God's love in giving his Son to die for us, manifest the removal of the enmity of our carnal mind, and bring us into a state of sweet love and communion with God. There is joy even in the sorrows of Christians, as believers can testify. They prefer the weeping for sin, the sighs of repentance and compunction of heart, to all the joy they ever had in worldly things. And if it be so even now, what will it be when God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ! Then, indeed, they " shall come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall

obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Meditation.

I want to know the sorrows of the believer more and more, that I may have at last his joys and consolations. What is all the joy of this world but emptiness and vanity! "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. But O may my sorrow spring chiefly from the view of that crucified One, whom my sins have pierced, and who bore the chastisement of my peace! May true compunction arise in my heart from my ingratitude to him, and my unutterable folly and wickedness in despising and rejecting him who died for my sins.

4. THE MEEK.

A third passive grace is mentioned as blessed by our Lord, that of meekness. Christian meekness is a very different spirit from that natural quiet, and easy, and yielding disposition which we sometimes see in persons that are manifestly worldly. Such persons give up God's truth for the sake of peace. The truly meek maintain God's truth firmly, but in the spirit of gentleness and patience, "speaking the truth in love." It is a grace founded on poverty of spirit, and mourning for sin. When a man feels his own sinfulness and nothingness, he is thereby preserved from murmuring against God's dealings with him, however humbling. Instead of stumbling at God's word, and being offended with it, he trembles at it, "receiving with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save his soul." Instead of fretting against the Lord, he remembers his ways and is ashamed and confounded, and has his mouth closed. (Psalm xxxix. 9; Ezek. xvi. 61—63.) And so with regard to his fellow-men; this meekness of spirit is seen in the way in which all injuries inflicted by others are received: "not rendering railing for railing, but con-

trariwise blessing ; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure may give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

This grace is opposed to irritability under provocations, and to impatience under delays and sufferings. Thus Moses, under many provocations, was eminent for meekness. Thus David bore Shimei's curses, having deep conviction of his own criminal conduct. But the most eminent example of meekness was our Lord Christ. As a "sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth ; when he was reviled, he reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

There is something indescribably excellent in the meekness of our Lord. He had all power in heaven and earth ; he knew the falsehood and wickedness of his enemies, but with a calm, tender, loving, patient, and unruffled spirit, he bore all their malignity, wept over their sinfulness ; on the very cross he cried out, "Father ! forgive them, they know not what they do :" and, after his resurrection, he sent first to Jerusalem the tidings of the free grace for sinners obtained by his death. See the meekness with which he met every insult, and in what meekness of wisdom he answered every ensnaring question. Well might he say to us, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

The promise to the meek is, "they shall inherit the earth." Here, too, there is a present as well as a future fulfilment. Outwardly, indeed, now the meek do not inherit the earth ; rather the very reverse, as we see fully set forth in the 11th of Hebrews—but there is a spiritual inheritance possessed by them. Of this the apostle speaks when he says, "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." The real use of every thing, as it regards the great end of life, preparation for future glory, a Christian now has. All his losses as well as his gains, his sorrows as well as his joys, his mortifications as well as his gratifications, are

working for his best good and glory. He is calm and peaceful under that which fills the proud and irritable with rage and enmity. He enjoys those blessings which Providence affords to all, without the disturbing disquietude of unholy and angry passions, and he has a hope full of immortality.

And what he has now in spirit, he will have really and visibly on the day of the Lord's return. The saints in glory now sing, "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." By and bye "he will appear," and in "the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," the real sovereignty and inheritance of the earth will be given to the meek. In this prospect we should join the apostle's song, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

Meditation.

May I learn of him who, though all the angels of God worship him, was meek and lowly in heart! O may the humility of Jesus make me ashamed of my pride, and cause me to abhor all that impatience of spirit and irritability of temper, which is so contrary to the spirit of my Lord! Let me remember what the eloquent and holy father, Chrysostom, says, "The true secret of living in peace with the world is to have a humble opinion of ourselves. True goodness is invariably accompanied with mildness and humility."

5. THE HUNGERING AND THIRSTING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The fourth grace is a middle grace between passive or suffering graces, and those which are more active. The preceding graces manifest that the spiritual man is made

deeply sensible of his own want of righteousness. As he grows in grace, active and ardent desires are stirred up in his heart after that righteousness, in which he feels that he is so deficient, and in the want of which the whole creation sighs and groans.

Hunger and thirst express, in a strong manner, the earnest and intense desires of the inner man after this blessing. Wonderful is that grace which brings it to pass that one who naturally delights only in sin, should be so completely changed as to delight supremely in righteousness, and to dread and hate sin as the worst of all evils.

This change is effected by seeing and believing God's love to us in giving his Son to die for us. In the blaze of that holy love, and in the true view which that magnifying glass presents of things, all the vile abominations of our hearts are seen. Just as in a drop of water, when brought, in the full light of the sun, under a powerful microscope, though it seemed pure, are discovered all sorts of floating and unclean creatures, full of life and activity, so it is in the heart. Those who merely by the light of nature, look into their hearts, imagine that all is pure and good, but let "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus shine into the heart," and it will be fully seen and felt that the heart is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." And when this discovery is made of our vileness, a similar discovery is made of the excellence of righteousness. O how lovely is the righteousness of God to me a sinner, when I see all that righteousness engaged to bless me, returning to him by Jesus Christ, and thus know that he is "a just God and a Saviour!" He sent forth his Son Jesus "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." In that wonderful propitiation, I, a sinner, can bear to gaze on that glorious attribute of divine righteousness, and see that this attribute is not condemning me, but justifying me, while believing in Jesus. Thus the righteousness of God is no longer my enemy, but my friend; it

is to me lovely and delightful. I see its inexpressible value and importance. I see the whole creation would be miserable without it. I see it is the security for every good, as sin is the source of all sorrow, misery, and death: hateful to God and ruinous to man. Hence are excited in my heart those holy thirstings after righteousness which mark the renewed soul. Nothing else can content him. Sin is his burden and grief. He exclaims, while conflicting with it, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Holiness is his great aim and pursuit.

There need be no dispute what righteousness is meant. It is doubtless the gift of Christ to live and die for me a sinner, and his perfect righteousness and obedience, that attracts and wins my sinful heart; but while I thus see the excellence of God's righteousness in my free justification by Christ, I am led to be like God altogether in righteousness and in grace, in holiness and in mercy, and in the entire sanctification of my soul, and to long for the whole world being made truly righteous in his sight.

They that thus hunger and thirst "shall be filled." As God the Holy Ghost excites these desires in their hearts, so he will more and more here renew them after the divine image. There is a growth in grace in the children of God. As "the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day." Sin becomes more hateful; he more abhors himself for it. He becomes more conscious of his own weakness, and more simply dependent on the Lord. He sees more clearly that he can only be justified freely by grace, and loves the Lord more, who has bought him with his blood.

Yet it is not in this life that he is filled. "I will behold thy face in righteousness," says David, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." The day is rapidly now hastening on, when "the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" shall appear. At the return of our Redeemer he will effectually establish righteousness in the earth. And "when he shall appear we shall

be like him, for we shall see him as he is." How sweetly does St. John speak of that happy day! "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water."

Meditation.

How infinitely important is it that these main springs of action, the wishes and desires of the heart should be purified! O that I may be led, by the Spirit of God, so to think of his righteousness and its inexpressible excellence that, with the apostle Paul, I may count all things else but loss to win Christ, and obtain "the righteousness which is of God by faith!" While men go through many sacrifices to gain earthly objects of ambition, may this really glorious and worthy object of desire, divine righteousness, excite all my ardent longings of soul, and be pursued by me with eager and supreme desire.

6. THE MERCIFUL.

The connection of righteousness and mercy is often brought before us in the word of God. In the gospel, "mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Having ourselves obtained righteousness through the rich grace and mercy of our God: having ourselves been delivered from our sinful state, through his loving-kindness, we are in the prepared state of mind for shewing mercy to others. We are besides, continual, yes, constant pensioners on the same divine bounty; when living daily by faith, receiving all that we have now from grace, and expecting all hereafter from grace only, we are just in the right posture for shewing a merciful spirit to others.

Mercifulness is that grace which looks with tenderness and grief, pity and compassion, on the miseries of others, and is truly desirous of relieving those miseries according

to the ability God has given us. The object of mercy is misery, and to help those in necessity is the aim and desire of the merciful man.

Naturally, men shrink from objects of distress and necessity ; they disturb our quiet ; they occasion us trouble : we are disposed to pass by on the other side. And in some, this harshness will grow to despising them and blaming them, and so increasing their misery. But the merciful man sees his brother in necessity, and is touched with feelings of sympathy and compassion for him, and with inward desires to relieve and comfort. All his own comforts lead him to pity others. His loaded table leads him to think of their scanty board ; his warm clothing, of their nakedness ; his fireside, of their few embers ; his blessedness in scriptural knowledge, of their darkness and ignorance ; his joy in Christ, of their sorrow without Christ. And in this state of mind "the liberal deviseth liberal things." He remembers that he is but the steward of all he has, and that the Lord, full of mercy and love, would have all his goods not hoarded up, but distributed for the good of others ; having given many charges to his stewards to be liberal. "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. God loveth a cheerful giver."

The same merciful spirit is seen in its actings towards those who have offended and injured us, not only bearing patiently with them as in the case of meekness, but freely forgiving them. What if they have abused my kindness, and are unthankful and unworthy, shall I, who owe all my hopes to sovereign grace and goodness, refuse to manifest grace to the evil and unthankful ? let at least the time of grace be yet prolonged to them, as God prolongs it to me.

Nor will the fear of injuring ourselves stop the current of mercy. Jesus, though "he was rich, for our sakes became poor," and mercy will submit to many of the inconveniences of the miserable in order to raise them out of their misery. Those thus merciful shall indeed "obtain mercy." They feel they need it, because they are still

sinful. That they have obtained mercy already is seen in the very fact of their being merciful. God also deals mercifully and graciously with them in all that yet concerns them in this life ; all shall work together for good, and they may say in the full confidence of faith, "surely mercy and goodness shall follow me all the days of my life."

But the chief need sinners have of mercy is in the day of judgment—a day yet to come. Thus the apostle, speaking of the labours of mercy and love of Onesiphorus, joins together prayers for mercy for him in the present life and in the day of Christ. "The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus—the Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." And you may observe (Matt. xxv. 34—40.) that all the righteous reward of the saints proceeds on the grounds of these works of mercy in this life, done under the animating motive of redeeming love.

Meditation.

What hope can I have from God which is not founded on or drawn from his mercies in Christ Jesus to my soul ! Oh, then, how intolerable would be hardness and severity of judgment and harshness of conduct from me towards others. Compassion was the unfailing character of the good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep ; let me gaze upon his pity and love, till I find his spirit imparting to me the same melting pity and tenderness towards the sinful and miserable.

7. THE PURE IN HEART.

The sixth grace mentioned by our Lord is purity in heart. The mercifulness of the Christian is not like the alms of the hypocrite, a cloak for wickedness or self-righteousness, but goes on to inward purity. This purity is also a higher stage of grace, as pointing out the discrimination and holy motive of his mercy. The heart does not mean here merely the affections, but includes and embraces the

mind and conscience, the thoughts and will, as well as the affections. The means of this inward purity is the cleansing blood of Jesus the Son of God ; that alone is efficacious to purify us. As under the law of Moses " the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh : " so much more under the gospel, " the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, shall purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God." This blood discovers to me all the fearful guilt and danger of my sins, and yet, in the full atonement made, allows me not only without danger, but as the very way of safety, freely to confess every sin, assuring me that " the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth from all sin."

On this true view of my sinfulness, and acknowledgment of it, all controversy ceases between me and God. I want no more subterfuge, excuse, and self-justification. I view things as they are really ; in his sight my eye is single. I am a sinner indebted to sovereign mercy for every hope. I receive the atonement, and return to God, and delight in him, under that cheering promise and assurance, " I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins ; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." Thus the sinner's heart is purified by faith. Acts xv. 9.

Now the true principle of all acceptable service, even love, is implanted. " We love him because he first loved us." The believer really loves God, and delights in him, and hence hates sin as the worst enemy of God and man. Sin is loathsome and abominable in his sight. Now God's glory is aimed at as the great end of life. Purity and holiness are one thing, entire dedication to God. God is holy, as he is, if we may say so, consecrated and set apart to maintain those holy perfections and attributes which form his excellence and glory. And the believer has a oneness with God ; in being set apart to his glory and the good of others, he works as God works ; desiring, as grace prevails, nothing inconsistent with, or not according to, the will of his heavenly Father.

In attaining this end, the Christian is guided and governed by the word of God, and aims in godly simplicity and sincerity to fulfil his profession. We are not however to imagine that he is perfectly pure. "He purifieth himself." It is a daily work to come to be washed afresh in the blood of the Lamb ; to be purified afresh by new communications of the Holy Ghost according to the gracious promises so fully laid before us ; (Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.) and, after all, in the midst of his purity, there is the most humbling conviction of sinfulness as set before us, (v. 31.) "Then shall ye remember your evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations."

To those thus pure in heart there is the promise, "They shall see God." This is sweetly realized in this life. "If the eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." When there is purity of heart, there is real delight in God. Such find God in his house, and at his table, and in secret, when others find him not. They see him in every providence, and in all the works of creation. They see him in their sorrows and in their joys. In short, they can say from the heart, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." But this spiritual sight of God's glory now is far short of that full vision of his glory here promised. The apostle Paul thus distinguishes it. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face ; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." "To see God as he is ;" to be in that heavenly Jerusalem in which is "the throne of God and the Lamb," where "his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads" —this is the full blessing here promised.

Prayer for purity in heart.

O most Holy God, infinite in purity, in whose sight the heavens are not clean, how can a wretched sinner like myself hope to dwell for ever with thee ! Blessed be thy

name for the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. There do I now come to wash my polluted robes in the cleansing blood of Jesus. As his death has atoned for all my guilt, so may it fill me with hatred of sin and love to thee. And Oh, do thou so cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that I may perfectly love thee, and ever worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

8. THE PEACE-MAKERS.

We come to the last and highest grace of the Christian, in which he especially resembles God. As in that splendid list of the Redeemer's titles (Isaiah ix. 6.) the last is "the Prince of Peace," so in the beautiful list of Christian graces the last character is the peace-makers. The God of peace is a title indeed that our God takes to himself, as especially connected with the work of our salvation. O how wonderful was that love which provided such a propitiation as the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, to put away man's enmity, and that his ministers might everywhere be commissioned to proclaim the word of reconciliation, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Thus the word which God sends is "preaching peace by Jesus Christ." Christ himself also "is our peace." healing all divisions between God and man, and Jew and Gentile, "having reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

The Christian becomes a partaker of this Godlike, this Christlike spirit of peace-making. Having peace in his own conscience with God, through the peace-making blood of the Redeemer, his whole spirit is peaceable. "The wisdom which cometh from above is first pure, then peaceable." He "follows after things which make for peace." If, in obedience to the divine command, he contends earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, he knows that without it there is no real or lasting peace for man.

He speaks " the truth in love," not in wrath and bitterness. He meddles not with those who are given to change, but is among the " quiet in the land." So in the church he seeks to give " no offence in any thing," lest the gospel should be impeded. He follows " the things which make for peace," joined to " the things wherewith one may edify another." Thence he endeavours to " keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And thus Christians in their neighbourhood, and in their family, have the same spirit of peace. They " depart from evil and do good, they seek peace and pursue it." You see thus joined together in the scriptures, truth and love, holiness and peace. " Follow peace with all men, and holiness."

Now the most effectual way, in the end, of doing this, does not at first sight seem to be the most likely method. While our Saviour is the Prince of peace, and at his birth the angelic song filled the heavens, " peace on earth and good will towards men," he sent forth his ministers with the gospel of peace to testify, " I came not to send peace but a sword." (Matt. x. 34.) The gospel offends men's prejudices, and everywhere stirs up their enmity, and yet is he who is spreading that gospel a true peace-maker. For the gospel first gives peace to a man's own bosom. " Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In the free acknowledgment of our guilt in all its aggravations, and free salvation by grace through faith, an ample and solid foundation is laid for peace within. I can see all my sinfulness with all its enormity, and loathe and abhor myself, and only be the more filled with joy and peace in believing, and have my heart enkindled with a holy fire of love to God and man. Hence to such a man there is nothing now to hinder his approach to God. He has even " boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." God and the believer have one mind on sin, on holiness, on righteousness, and on grace. The loving and holy mind of God being thus imparted to the believer, he is full of love to others, longing that they should partake of the same peace and joy. Hence he willingly suffers much

to promote the diffusion of this heavenly peace ; and how joyful is the prospect that in the coming kingdom of Christ, " the righteous shall flourish, and there shall be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." And besides this spiritual peace, the same disposition will be manifest in promoting outward peace, and restoring it when it has been lost. " If it be possible as much as in you lieth, live peaceably with all men." All mediators, indeed, from Jesus downwards, have suffered in making peace ; those most blameworthy will be sure to condemn the umpire who decides against them ; but to " know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings," to suffer for well-doing, is a real privilege and honour put upon us, as will be soon manifested in the coming day of glory. In the meanwhile the peace-makers shall even here be called the children of God. They are really so. " Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." It is true this sonship is now unacknowledged by man ; " therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not ;" but it is a real fact. " Beloved, now are we the sons of God." It is, however, now a spiritual though real blessedness, consisting in likeness to God, heavenly-mindedness, and a hope full of immortality. " The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God ; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together."

But this spiritual blessedness will soon be manifested in visible glory. " The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." All is now hidden and veiled, all is like the seed under ground, dying and quickening, but covered from the eye of man. " For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." But it will not be so long. " When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." The harvest of the church is fast ripening for the heavenly kingdom.

Prayer for Christian graces.

O Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who seest my darkness, sinfulness, and weakness, and hast appointed a throne of grace, where, in this day of salvation, I may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need ; drawn by thy sweet promises, I come to thee ; I come to thee under the sense of my sinfulness and danger, and beseech thee to make me, by thine own effectual teaching, to be poor in spirit, to mourn for sins, and to be meek in heart. Make me, then, by the same gift of thy Spirit, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to be merciful to others, and pure in heart, and numbered with the peace-makers. And may all those great and gracious promises which thy beloved Son has connected with those graces, thus be granted to me here and for ever.

I ask the same blessings for the whole church of God, and that every where thus thy people may be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. O hear me for the glory of thy great name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

1. Their importance and connection—2. The nature and continuance of Repentance—3. The nature and objects of Faith—4. Examples of Faith—5. Tests of Faith—6. Means of increasing it—7. The triumphs of Faith.

1. THE IMPORTANCE AND CONNECTION OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

THE prominent or chief place given in the Holy Scriptures to these two leading duties will be very evident. Every earnest address in the Bible calls to the one or the other of them. They are eminently made the turning-point of perishing, or of salvation. Thus of repentance it is said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish: Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." And of faith it is equally said, "He that believeth not shall be damned: he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

And as each is thus important, so we very frequently find them combined together. Thus our Lord preaches: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel. Mark i. 15. Thus the apostle states his teaching both publicly, "and from house to house," to be "testifying repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts xx. 21. He joins together in other places the mention of these two; thus he speaks of "repentance unto the acknowledgment of the truth." 2 Tim. ii. 2 5. "Repentance from dead works

and faith towards God." Heb. vi. 1. These passages may suffice to shew the special connection between these leading duties, as well as the very important place which they hold in the gospel of Christ.

How great is the goodness of God in giving space for repentance to us sinners, and a way of salvation by faith! Had we been dealt with according to the righteous severity of the law, there would have been no such space, no such way. Its just sentence is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Repentance and faith are provisions of grace and mercy for our recovery. They are two parts of the same new nature given us by the Spirit of God, and are both imparted at the same time to the soul truly born of God.

Faith indeed is first requisite, because the word of God being the great means of calling men to repentance, and that word only being profitable as it is believed, I can only repent as I receive God's truth. This is the case with all the varied degrees of repentance. But in every step of genuine faith, a step is taken also in repentance.

The earnestness with which God exhorts his ministers to call men to repentance, may well shew us the view in which God regards this duty: "Cry aloud; spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sin.—Come now, and let us reason together: repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin.—God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." A main object for which our Redeemer visited our world was, as he assures us, "to call sinners to repentance."

O Christian reader, despise not all these commands and pleadings of the great God your Father; "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" It is perfectly clear, by these entreaties and calls, that your God would not have you perish. He has solemnly assured you in his word, he has "no pleasure in the death of a sinner:" he "is not willing

that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Believe your God; obey his commands; repent of every thing that you have done wrong, and give him glory by acknowledging his righteousness and love in every thing.

Prayer for Repentance.

O thou who hast promised to give a new heart and a new spirit, and to put thy Spirit within us! O thou who hast exalted thine own Son our Lord Jesus Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance; take away my hard and stony heart, give me repentance unto life; that my heart being changed and converted, I may be truly reconciled to thee; and seeing the great wickedness of forsaking thee, may turn to thee with godly sorrow and contrition, through Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

2. THE NATURE AND CONTINUANCE OF REPENTANCE.

Repentance is a change of mind arising from an afterview of our conduct, and is connected with real sorrow for our sins, and a hearty turning from sin unto God.

Under the natural darkness of our fallen state, we are fearfully and totally blind as to the truth and reality of things, and this is a state of unutterable misery. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." In this condition, and under this woe, are we all through our own sin and unbelief.

In this state of sin and rebellion God bears with us, and heaps up mercies upon us without number, that his long-suffering "and goodness" may "lead us to repentance." He leaves none in all the earth without witness of his love, doing good to all. "He gives to all life and breath and all things, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him." But instead of this, "when

they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful : all the world is become guilty before God."

Men being thus sinful, the glorious gospel of the grace of God, proclaiming Jesus the Son of God, in our nature, dying on the cross for us ; Jesus the Saviour of the lost, the Redeemer of the world, and pardon and grace and salvation through him for all man, is sent by the blessed God to every creature. By the brightness of divine love and righteousness, it dispels the darkness of their minds, and shews them their extreme danger and unutterable folly, and most aggravated guilt.

Some believe not the message of God. Satan blinds their eyes, so that its light shines not into their hearts. And thus the gospel becomes hid to them that are lost. Thus what should have been a " savour of life," becomes a " savour of death ;" that which should have been for their welfare, becomes an occasion of falling : and this only through a wilful choice of sin and resistance of grace ; through a wilful hatred of light and love of darkness.

But where this message is believed, how different the issue ! Then the hard heart is softened ; the stubborn will subdued ; the arms of rebellion are thrown aside ; contrition, tenderness, humility, mourning for sin, and all holy feelings have their birth and growth ; the soul is melted with divine love, and yields itself wholly to God in deep gratitude, devoted obedience, and willing service.

But let us distinguish here between the first workings of repentance and the continuance of it : distinguishing them, as the scriptures do, into the " washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."

Regeneration is our new birth unto righteousness : it is the beginning of spiritual life ; the being " passed from death unto life." In some, as in John the Baptist, it begins with the very commencement of life ; the promise concerning him was, " He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." But ordinarily God's word is the main instrument used by the Divine Spirit for communicating this great and life-giving change.

St. James says, i. 18. "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth."

Baptism is connected with this new birth, as being the sign of it, and a means of grace ordained of Christ for assuring it to us. John iii. 3—5. Titus iii. 5. Col. ii. 11, 12.

How vitally important to know that this great change has been wrought in us—to be assured that we have not been baptized with water only, but with the Holy Ghost also! The outward ordinance may be, and very often is, totally separated from the inward change. Rom. ii. 28, 29. The scriptures therefore dwell much on the nature of this all-important change. It is a life out of death. "God hath quickened us together with Christ." It is a resurrection to a heavenly life. "He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is a new creation. If any man be in Christ he is "a new creature." It is known by love to all; (1 John iv. 7.) love to the brethren; (1 John iii. 14.) faith in the Saviour; (John v. 24. 1 John v. 1.) love to the scriptures; (1 Peter ii. 2.) not committing sin; (1 John iii. 9. 1 John v. 18.) doing righteousness; (1 John ii. 29.) and overcoming the world. 1 John v. 4. These scriptural evidences may assist every one in examining himself, as to his being the subject of this absolutely necessary change, without which we can never enter the kingdom of heaven. They ought also to guard every one against the fearful delusion of resting in the form of baptism, without its grace and full blessedness.

The sole author of this change is God himself, who by his own Spirit imparts spiritual life. The sons of God are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

We have a striking instance of this great change in the prodigal's coming to himself in the far country. We have another striking picture of it in the conversion of the apostle Paul, and the total change of his character. We have similar examples in the three thousand who were pierced to the heart and converted on the day of Pentecost. Indeed

the Acts of the Apostles abound with the history of such total and entire changes in the character of men, by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and who were children of wrath even as others.

Christian reader, then, look well within. Inquire if you can discern, perhaps not the time, but the reality of a work of grace on your own heart. Are you deeply affected by your sinfulness? Are your affections set on things above? Are you living by the faith of the Son of God? Is your heart filled with love to all men, and especially to the brethren? Are you overcoming the world? The great work of life has yet to be done, if this be not your character. "You must be born again." John iii. 7.

But if you are desirous of this great change, under the painful conviction that you are yet ignorant of it, remember how graciously God has promised to give "the new heart and the new spirit," and to take the stony heart away, and put his Spirit within us. Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 27. Remember that all he demands of us is to seek this from him in fervent prayer. Ezek. xxxvi. 37. And what prayer can be more suitable than the one which he has given you to use! "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

We proceed next to consider THE RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST, or the daily practice of repentance in the believer's life. His daily life is "sowing in tears, going forth weeping, and bearing precious seed." This arises from his remaining sinfulness. The divine work of the new birth, like the first birth of man, has its infancy, and growth, and maturity. There is in the same individual, "the old man" and "the new man," the flesh and the spirit, the carnal mind and the spiritual mind; and from this mixed character there is daily sin in all we do. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

There being daily sin in the heart and life of a believer, there is need of daily and constant repentance and renewal. What a confession that holy man Daniel made of his own

sins, and the sins of his country? What a similar acknowledgment the righteous Job, brought to a deeper sense of his sinfulness, made. "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes!" Peter again "went out and wept bitterly." David also gives us, in the 51st Psalm, a full description of the feelings of a godly man truly penitent.

This spirit of daily repentance becomes us, not only on account of our sins, but also for the sins of others. God regards with special favour those "that sigh and mourn for the abominations done around them." Ezek. ix. 4.

This is that broken, contrite heart, which our God so highly approves, that he says, "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit."

In fact it is the fruit of his own Spirit, the work of his own grace. If he "turn us we are turned." Jer. xxxi. 8. He gives "repentance unto Israel." Acts v. 30. He "grants to the Gentiles repentance unto life." Acts xi. 18. It is all his work. O seek daily from him this sorrow for sin, which is the very ground on which grows holy joy, happy peace, and full love.

Meditation.

See then, my soul, how precious a humble, broken, mourning spirit is before God! "A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise!" May I value this far above all the poor glory of this transient world, and never be satisfied but in being a "new creature in Christ Jesus."

3. THE NATURE AND OBJECTS OF FAITH.

Faith is a belief of what we are informed of by another. Divine faith is such a belief of what God says in his word as to become "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." It gives a real existence, not only to the mind, but also to the heart, of unseen things which, without this faith, have no influence upon us, but which, believed with the heart, govern all our principles,

affections and conduct. It is therefore far more than a bare assent of the understanding, a sure trust and confidence in God, a calm reliance on his faithfulness and goodness, a will choosing him, and a heart trusting in him for essential parts of scriptural truth. See the Church of England's definition of faith, in the Homily on Salvation.

Man first fell from God by disbelieving what God had told him, and crediting what Satan, his great enemy suggested to his mind. Surrounded with innumerable proofs of God's love, he rejected them all, under the temptation of attaining something better and higher, without God, and in opposition to his will.

Similar are Satan's temptations to the present day : and all our recovery is by returning to entire confidence in God, and unreserved obedience to the revelation of his word.

The truth of the Bible as being really the word of the living God, has already been stated. (ch. 1.) The rejection of that truth through unbelief, is wholly a man's own fault ; while the reception of it is wholly of divine grace. This, which appears a contradiction to the proud, unhumbled heart, is a holy and joyful truth to the real believer. But indeed it is one part of the great office of the Holy Spirit to convince the world of sin, because of its unbelief in the Son of God. John xvi. 9. The pride of heart, and love of sin, which are the grand impediments to the understanding and the reception of truth, (Prov. xxviii. 5,) are voluntary impediments, because God has promised to remove them if we will look to him. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 31, 37. But men choose to retain their proud and high thoughts of themselves, and to indulge their lusts, rather than come to Christ for life, and then seek to charge all the fault of this on God, and refuse to be convinced, till there be no remedy. Thus God's awful judgments become necessary, and they will assuredly fall upon those who by hardness of heart, and persevering impenitence, " treasure up for themselves wrath against the day of wrath."

The workings of faith in the word of God, are varied according to the varied objects of faith there set before us.

GOD, our FATHER, is the chief object of faith ; as infinite in power, holiness and love ; everywhere present ; altogether righteous and gracious ; so deeply concerned in all that concerns us, that the very hairs of our head are all numbered by him. Faith in these truths is the first step in religion, "without which it is impossible to please God ; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten Son of God, the revealer of the Father, and the brightness of his glory, is everywhere set before the church of God as another primary object of faith, from the first promise,—"The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent,"—to the last testimony, "Surely I come quickly." Faith then will contemplate him in all his original riches and glory, as one with the Father before the world was ; in all the greatness of his love, undertaking to become man to atone for our guilt, in all the depth of his humiliation, the completeness of his redemption, and the glories of his resurrection, and of his coming again. Looking at these things, faith fills the heart with love, and enables us "to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

Faith regards this Saviour also in all his varied offices ; as our PROPHET he is divinely appointed to teach and declare the Father to us. John xvii. 26. And faith rejoices in having such an infallible Teacher. As our HIGH PRIEST, he has an unchangeable priesthood ; and faith gladly thus approaches to God by him. As our KING, he reigns now a Prince and a Saviour, to give all those gifts which he has received for the rebellious, and he shall soon return to reign over the whole world. Rev. xi. 15. Faith exults in this, and anticipates the universal song—"Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Rev. xix. 6.

Faith is also exercised with reference to THE HOLY SPIRIT. The Bible says much of him throughout, from the first statement concerning him, that the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, to the last mention of him, as leading the general invitation to the Saviour, of the

church, and all that hear it ; " The Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come." Faith stedfastly receives all this divine testimony concerning the Holy Ghost ; knows that he is given to believers ; earnestly seeks this precious gift in prayer, and finds that it is given to them that ask. Oh how precious are the exercises of faith through which we are led by the Spirit, receive the spirit of adoption, walk in the Spirit, and bring forth all his gracious fruit !

The approaching judgment of the great day of the Lord, the threatenings of future wrath, and the revelation of future glory, furnish other important, unspeakably important objects of faith, in the realising of which the believer finds most powerful motives to live above this present world, to flee from all its corruptions, and walk with God. Thus " by faith " the Israelites, believing God's threatenings, " kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them." Thus St. Paul felt it a " small matter to be judged of man's judgment," bearing in mind that it was the Lord that judged him, and so he ever sought in all his labours to be accepted of him. 2 Cor. v. 9. Thus he went through all his afflictions, in the spirit of faith, without fainting, knowing that they " worked for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Meditation.

See then, my soul, how important it is to study diligently the word of God, in which are set before us all the varied objects of faith, by which that grace is given, called forth, exercised and increased. If I would be strong in faith, I must consider much the objects of faith. Let me not spend my strength, therefore, in curious inquiries about the meaning of faith, but set its bright objects before me as revealed in the Bible, and may I find by the light and holy comfort which they give me, that I do truly believe.

4. ON EXAMPLES OF FAITH.

It is the general principle of scripture, "the just live by faith;" there is a life peculiar to the just, and that life is attained and continued by faith. We see this great truth exemplified in the lives of all God's people, and the varied manifestations of it in different lives, will help us to see the excellence and importance of faith.

ABEL is the first example set before us in the word of God. His faith regarded the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world," and which was slain from the foundation of the world, "and by faith he offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." May he, though dead, thus speak to us, as to the unutterable importance of regarding God's appointed method of drawing near to him.

ENOCH is a second striking example of faith, in its victory over death. "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him, for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." A similar victory in spirit is given to every believer now. Our Lord says "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." John ii. 26. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying he shall never see death." John viii. 51. It is not death, to say as Paul did, "I desire to depart and be with Christ." It is not death, when we can see heaven open, and pray for our murderers as Stephen did, and cry out "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." We are more than conquerors over this and every other enemy, and translated in spirit now beyond its sting, even as Enoch was, far above all its bitterness; and we are expecting to be translated at the coming of our Lord with glorified bodies, and ever to be with him.

NOAH was another example of faith, enabling a man to stand alone, unmoved by the apostacy from God of the whole world. He believed God's threatenings of the deluge, and thence "by faith Noah being warned of God of things

not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark, to the saving of his house." By a similar faith in the threatening of a second destruction of our world by fire at the coming of our Lord, we shall be enabled to confess God's truth, and prepare for his coming judgment; withstanding error, however generally approved, and evil, however generally practised!

Abraham's faith was so remarkable, that he is called "the father of us all. Notice his faith, among other things, in his seeing God's love in his severest commands. He is bidden, at the very first, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house:" and believing the promises, the faithfulness, and the love of God, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed." We see a still higher example of the same confidence in God's love, in his ready obedience to another apparently most severe and hard command: But God gave Abraham faith equal to his trial. "By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac." He thus received that most august of all titles, he was called "the friend of God." Isaiah xli. 8.

We will notice one more illustrious example of the same faith;—Moses, in his superiority to all the allurements of this world. His temporal prospects of earthly honours, riches and pleasures, as the adopted child of Pharaoh, were most seductive and flattering. Every thing that this world could give he might hope for, by entering into worldly plans; all these were forfeited by joining the despised and oppressed people of God. He did this even when they were, as we see, in a state of great unbelief and hardness of heart; yet he despised them not, because the promise, the truth, and the service of God were really with them.

These various examples will make plain to you the real character and excellence of faith. O may they stir you up, Christian reader, to be a "follower of those who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises."

Prayer for the faith of God's elect.

O thou, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give me grace to tread in the footsteps of the flock of Christ, and be in my life another proof and evidence that the faith of God's elect is still imparted to men on earth. And above and beyond all, may I be looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith; at his sufferings and his glory, and truly follow him, for his name's sake.

5. PROOFS OF FAITH.

Faith being so precious a grace, it need not surprise us that there should be many counterfeit faiths in the world; many who say that they have faith, and yet what they would rest in as faith is dead, barren and unprofitable.

The epistle of St. James is full of tests and evidences by which we may distinguish real faith from the counterfeit resemblance of it. Where there is only a counterfeit faith, a man will ask blessings of God, but with a wavering, unbelieving mind, full of doubts, whether God hears. Where there is only a counterfeit faith, men will charge God with their sins and temptations—they will be hearers only of the word, and not doers, deceiving their own souls—they will greatly respect outward rank and appearance, and despise the poor—they will make a charitable profession, but give the poor none of those things which are needful for the body—they will have an unbridled tongue, with envying, strife, confusion, and every evil work—they will be heaping up treasures together—little aware of the testimony which those treasures will furnish against them. These are marks which St. James gives us of an unprofitable faith. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

In contrast with all this, real faith counts it all joy to fall into divers temptations, knowing that "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." By real faith "a man looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continues therein,

and being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Real faith regards the poor man as a brother, seeing God has "chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him." Real faith is full of love, and rejoices "to shew mercy." Real faith is followed by the ready sacrifice of the dearest earthly good at the command of God. Real faith gives a man that heavenly wisdom "that is from above, and is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." In short, real faith is "patient unto the coming of the Lord," expecting then its full recompense and blessedness.

There is another counterfeit faith of a different kind, but full of danger also, which St. Paul describes as "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." This counterfeit faith leads a man to magnify outward things, the rites and observances that are seen of men, and the uniformity of the visible church, that is, a mere unity in outside things, rather than the oneness of a living spirit, which makes the whole church of Christ one. "There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." This was seen when the Jews rejected Christ. We behold this in its full evil in Popery, but there is much of the same spirit in all Protestant churches, and we need to be very watchful against that which is so easy and satisfactory to the carnal heart,—"going about to establish our own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God."

Our Lord gives a very discriminating and full guide on this subject; by the comparison of a good tree and an evil tree. Warning us against false prophets which should come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly be ravening wolves: and such false prophets have, alas, infested all professing churches of Christ, He says, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

Meditation.

How important is that charge, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove yourselves!" May God ever preserve me from a vain delusive faith, content with a mere approval of truth or profession of faith, without its happy efficacy in sanctifying and making us free from the bondage of sin and Satan!

6. MEANS OF INCREASING FAITH.

Faith is the gift of God. This is made clear by many testimonies of scripture. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." The Philippians are assured, "Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake." The same truth is included in the general statement of the way of salvation, "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

But this gift is bestowed in the use of means: and the word of God is the special means of attaining it. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" That word is so sure a ground and warrant of faith, that if men "hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

The order of the communication of the divine gifts is throughout such as to give all the glory of our salvation to God, and yet to afford the utmost encouragement to every human being that hears his word, to attend to it and confide in it. How the apostle gives glory to God, when he says to the Thessalonians, "We thank God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in you also that believe." So he blesses the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus," that the Ephesians trusted in

Christ, " after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Thus the reception of one gift prepares the heart for the communication of another and another, that the believer may be more and more enriched with spiritual blessings.

Do you want to know how to gain faith ? Ask the Holy Spirit to shew you the sin of unbelief. John xvi. 9. Diligently search the scriptures with prayer. Cry out to the Father of mercies for this his precious gift of faith. Pray with the poor afflicted father, " Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." Wait upon him, and we can assure you in the name of the great God, that you shall not wait in vain. " They that seek shall find."

Do you ask how you may increase and grow in faith ? You need still the same means. To have more and more the objects of faith, as set before you in the scriptures, brought before your mind, meditated upon and prayed over, is the way to have our faith enlarged. " Lord, increase our faith," was a prayer of the apostles, which it well becomes us often to use.

But the divine way of its increasing may be very different to our expectations. When Abraham asked, " Lord, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit the land," the covenant was renewed when " a horror of great darkness fell upon him." And so now, faith must be tried like gold in the fire, that it may be wholly purified, " and found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Thus it was when the Thessalonians were brought into persecutions and tribulations, the apostle says to them, " We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because your faith groweth exceedingly."

The things of this world have a tendency to deaden faith ; " the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," are all contrary and opposed to faith : sight and sense are opposed to faith and spirituality. Hence the apostle describes the Christian life thus, " We walk by

faith, and not by sight." In proportion, then, as we love and follow the world, faith becomes weaker. In proportion as we look "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," faith becomes stronger, till the soul arrives at full confidence in all God's promises, however beyond our reasonable hope,—as Abraham did. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Do not then be surprised, if the way by which it pleases God to increase your faith, at first only shews you your soul full of darkness, sin, and unbelief. We often think ourselves rich and increased with goods, and to have need of nothing, at the very time we are most poor and empty. We do not even seek the true riches till we feel our poverty. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Give up yourself to his guidance. By his word without, by his Spirit within, by the constant voice of conscience, he will lead you. Observe the promise, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye." Observe the all-important warning, "Be ye not as the horse or the mule, which have no understanding." God means in every thing your good. You may be sure of it by the gift of his Son to die for you. Harden not, then, your heart against him, but believe his love in all your sorrows and afflictions; let them shew you indeed your sinfulness and the evil of sin, but let them be to you as the salutary medicine by which God would heal you of that disease of sin, which is the real source of all evil.

Prayer for faith.

Source of every good and perfect gift, Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, who seest my fallen condition and misery through unbelief, and hast appointed faith as the means of my recovery, I entreat thee give unto me that most precious gift of lively and saving faith, taking away all unbelief from my heart, and enabling me to rest entirely on thy word, thy faithfulness, and thy loving-kindness, through Jesus, my Redeemer.

7. THE TRIUMPHS OF FAITH.

The apostle, after speaking of some of the many sorrows through which he had to pass in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, and the consolations which he received, comes to this joyful conclusion, "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." How severe that conflict in which the humble disciples of the Lord were engaged, with all the powers of the whole world, and Satan, its god, arrayed against them ! They triumphed over all, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. United in him they were constant victors, and in the full assurance of joy exclaim, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us ! "

The scriptures are the records of the triumphs of faith. They are full of proofs of the power of this mighty grace, by which human weakness is so strengthened with divine power, as to be able "to do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us."

In the 11th of Hebrews the apostle brings into one concentrated view the varied triumphs of the Old Testament saints, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

Every step in faith is a triumph over our fallen nature and inward corruption. When the gospel of God's love to us sinners is first proclaimed, Satan endeavours to stir up our corrupt nature to resist it as incredible, or to abuse it, as if God were indifferent to sin. Faith triumphs over those temptations, and in the death of God's only Son sees his infinite hatred of sin, and his inexpressible love to us sinners, and joyfully receives the good message. When the paths of holiness are set before us as the paths of true peace, joy and happiness, our corrupt nature shrinks and

sees only the death of all its pleasures, and the end of all its hope. Real faith trusts God when it cannot see where he is leading us; is sure that he who gave his Son to die for us must mean our best good, and being infinite in wisdom and power, he cannot be disappointed in his plans, and so walks in the paths of Christ, and finds them "ways of pleasantness."

The same triumphs are seen in faith's victory over the world. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Never do we see victory over the world in all its varied seductions, "the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," but through simple faith in Jesus the son of God. The amazing truth that God's only Son became man and died for us, realized by faith, deadens this world and all its glories, whilst it opens to us an infinitely more glorious world to come. What victories over the world, in the whole series of Christian martyrdoms under Pagan and Papal oppressors, does the history of the Christian Church open to us! The same victories are won daily in the more private experience of the Christian. In the conflicts with self-indulgence and self-gratification, in the firm standing against the course of this world, in loving Christ more than father or mother, or the dearest earthly friend, in the daily taking up our cross and following Christ, in the mortification of pride, vanity, and every unholy temper, in returning good for evil, in preferring poverty, with a good conscience, to wealth without, and, in short, in the whole of his path, the Christian struggles with and overcomes the world.

Once more, the last enemy, "death, is vanquished by faith." How exulting the apostle's appeal! "Death is swallowed up in victory!" To a mind duly awakened to the righteousness and holiness of God and our own sinfulness, the separation of body, and spirit, the coming before God's presence at death, and the account to be then rendered, may well gender terror and bondage. But faith shews us the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over this enemy, and our heavenly Father's love to us in death itself.

Faith is thus enabled to enumerate death as ours as well as life, and even to "desire to depart and be with Christ, as far better." Looking yet farther, faith can see death itself abolished in that world to come, where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

But would you see all triumphs combined in one, look at the Author and Finisher of our faith, our Head and Representative, the Lord Jesus Christ, humbling himself to wear our form, and in that form sustaining one continued conflict with evil all his days, gaining victories over every temptation of the enemy. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." Before he entered on his ministry, his faith, laying hold of God's word, baffled all the guile and malice of Satan. In the mysterious conflict in Gethsemane, though it was the hour of wicked men and the power of darkness, his faith never failed, nor did he ever withdraw his entire confidence in his Father; nor retract the entire surrender, "Not my will, but thine be done." On the accursed tree itself was the full consummation of this triumph; "the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering." While his enemies were revelling in their fancied triumphs, and Satan seemed completely victorious, "Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil," and not only attained his own joy and glory, but "delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." O the wonders of that cross! There we may see Jesus "forgiving us all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross, and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." You behold a mighty Conqueror, in his greatest weakness giving a place in paradise to his fellow-sufferer, darkening the sun, shaking the earth, bursting his own tomb, rending the tombs of many of his saints, and raising them with him, founding his church, ascending to

heaven, sending his omnipotent Spirit, and beginning the new creation of all things. Survey this triumph till your heart glow within you. Survey this triumph till you long to be baptized with his baptism, and enter into the fellowship of his sufferings.

Thanksgiving.

Thanks be unto thee, O merciful Father, thanks be unto thee for all that amazing love which has provided so fully for my immediate, daily, and entire return to thee, and for full assurance of thy loving-kindness to me. Thanks be unto thee above all for that unspeakable gift, the pledge of every other, the gift of thy Son Jesus Christ to be my Saviour, and his exaltation, to bestow all the gifts which my sinful soul needs.

O give me grace to believe all this love, and to shew forth continually thy praises, through the same thy Son Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRISTIAN HOLINESS.

1. The true measure of holiness—2. The nature of holiness—3. Holy affections to God—4. Holy affections to man—5. Personal holiness—6. The defects of our holiness—7. The means by which holiness is attained.

1. THE TRUE MEASURE OF HOLINESS.

ALL scripture teaches, and all experience proves, that man is in a sinful and evil state; full of unholy feelings and desires; afar off from God, and delighting in vain things that cannot profit. How is this sinful and evil creature to be recovered from his polluted state, and brought into a holy and happy condition? How is he to be made meet to dwell with God, and to be a companion of and equal with angels, and among the spirits of just men made perfect?

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the provision of God's mercy, wisdom, and loving-kindness for this great change. Its object is to raise men from their present ruined state as sinners, to the exalted character of saints, that they may be really blessed through eternity. All the doctrines, promises, threatenings, warnings, and precepts of the gospel have this end in view.

But let us rather direct our attention to the view given us in the scriptures of the divine excellence and glory, as the motive and measure for our holiness. "I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy. Lev. xi. 44. This is often repeated. Lev. xix. 2; xx. 7, 26. And it is pressed upon

us in the New Testament. "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." 1 Peter i. 15, 16.

'The holiness of God,' observes Mr. Wisheart, 'is that wherein the divine excellence does chiefly consist. Therefore it is the most frequent epithet given to his name in scripture. We never read 'mighty name' or 'wise name,' but frequently "holy name." This is his great title of honour; that wherein the divine majesty is most illustrious. The holiness of God is his glory and beauty. Therefore he is said to be "glorious in holiness." He is mighty in power and rich in grace, but glorious in holiness. It renders him glorious to himself, and glorious to all that understand what holiness is. The seraphim and the four living creatures praise his holiness, saying, "holy, holy, holy." We do not find any other attribute thus thrice repeated; it is never said wise, wise, wise; or merciful, merciful, merciful. Hence it is also that God singles out this attribute to swear by, as eminently marking its peculiar excellency. "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David."'

Holiness being the glory of God, is also the excellence and happiness of which he would have us to be full partakers and sharers. He is that overflowing fountain of goodness and blessedness, which never ceases to bless others, and with the design of making them a blessing.

What, then, is the divine holiness: the holiness of God? Indeed we cannot fathom its full glory, as all that concerns God is infinitely beyond our highest thoughts. It may be viewed, in regard to outward things, as altogether without defect, perfectly pure and free from all evil. Thus he is said to be "a God of truth and without iniquity." Deut. xxxii. 4. Nothing is farther from God than that "he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty than that he should do iniquity." Job xxxiv. 10. "There is no unrighteousness in him." Psalm xcii. 15. He utterly abhors all wickedness. "Thou art of purer eyes than to be-

hold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." Hab. i. 13. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." 1 John i. 5. He says to Israel, speaking of their wickedness, "O do not this abominable thing that I hate." Jer. xliv. 4. Even his own creatures, when yielding to sin, incur his hatred, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity." Psalm v. 5. Nor does he, though he permits it and overrules it, will and absolutely ordain it: but the very reverse. He forbids it most earnestly; "he tempts no man to it." James i. 13, 14. Nor is any man obliged to it but by his own corrupt will. If Esau sins, it is by his own choice. If Pharaoh is hardened, he first hardens himself by his own wilful rebellion against God's repeated commands. Speaking of these things, the Apostle asks, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" and he repels it with abhorrence—"God forbid!" Rom. ix. 14.

But it is not merely an outward holiness in separation from sin; God has *internal* and essential holiness; holiness in his own nature and being; self-existent, and the very character of his glory. So that his name is altogether holy, just, and good; his will is altogether holy. Hooker beautifully observes, 'Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High, whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his name, yet our soundest knowledge is, to know that we know him not as indeed he is, neither can know him, and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confess without confession, that his glory is inexplicable, his greatness above our capacity and reach. The work and operations of God have him both for their worker and for the law whereby they are wrought. The being of God is a kind of law to his workings; for that perfection which God is, gives perfection to that which he does. All those things which are done by God have some end for which they are done. The general end of God's external working is the exercise of his most glorious and abundant virtue. "The Lord hath made all things for his own sake;" not that any thing is made to be beneficial

unto him, but all things for him to shew beneficence and grace in them. He works all things, not only according to his own will, but the counsel of his own will. Eph. i. 11. They err, therefore, who think that of the will of God to do this or that, there is no reason besides his will.'

This holiness of God is in fact his conformity to his own essential goodness. It is the union of light and love in the one Jehovah ; but his revealed will is the discovery to us of that essential goodness. His holiness lies not in imitating the holiness of others, but the holiness of all others consists in their resemblance to perfection of goodness and beauty.

Holiness and blessedness are inseparably one. God is called " the blessed God," (1 Tim. i. 11,) as the perfectly happy one. His happiness is in his perfect purity and holiness. When God says to us, " Be ye holy, as I am holy," he says, Come and share my happiness ; be " heirs of God ;" have me for your portion and inheritance.

To know the excellence of the divine nature, and to rejoice in it, is the very spring of holiness. It is the one thing which the cherubim and seraphim, the angels and glorified hosts are unceasingly contemplating, admiring, and praising, (Isaiah vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8.) " Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Holiness is therefore the crown and perfection of the divine attributes. It is, in truth, our security against the misery which sin occasions ; it is our assurance that we shall in due time be free from all sin ; it is that which will ultimately unite all the redeemed creatures of God in perfect harmony with each other, and with the divine will, and therefore in perfect happiness.

The holiness of God, then, is our great model and pattern. And that we might have a clear, sensible, perfect, and living manifestation of this, the only-begotten of the Father, " the brightness of his glory," and " the express image of his person," became man, both to atone for our guilt, and by the precious promises of his free salvation to raise us from our sinful state, and also by his own

holy life, to be a perfect pattern and a sure guide for our conduct, that we might become partakers of the divine nature.

Thus the holiness of God becomes not only the measure and standard of holiness, but the joy and delight of the true believer. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name." This is the song of his praise: God's holy name is the sum of his song, as it is of the angels. He can, through the wonderful "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," connect with that holy name those contrast truths, "who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies." Psalm ciii.

Meditation.

And is it possible for me, a sinner, to rejoice in the divine holiness! Yes, in Christ Jesus, we may "glory" and rejoice "in his holy name." Psalm cv. 3. That holy name may be my trust as well as my joy. Psalm xxxiii. 21. Nor is any trust well founded that is not built upon the holiness as well as the mercy of God, and that does not lead me both to delight in and copy that holiness. May God give me this grace.

2. THE NATURE OF HOLINESS.

Since the sacred writers have testified that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" and "there shall in no wise enter" into the heavenly Jerusalem "any thing that defileth;" since our Lord has assured us, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," how important is it that we should have distinct views of what this holiness is! We have seen the measure of it in God's holiness; let us now consider the nature of it as imparted to man. Our holiness is our separation from sin, and devotedness to the service of God. The general meaning of the word "holy" applies to whatever is separated from common and ordinary,

to higher and sacred uses. Thus God speaks to Israel, "I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people. And ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine." Lev. xx. 24, 26.

Naturally all men are living in sin, and in the midst of a world lying in wickedness. God invites us to "come out and be separate," and not touch the unclean thing, under the promise that he will "receive us and be a father to us," and we shall be "the sons and daughters" of the Lord Almighty. Encouraged by "these promises," the believer comes out and seeks to "cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18; vii. 1.

Holiness, then, is nothing less than an entire death unto sin and a new life, wholly devoted to the will of God. Its language is—I am no longer my own, I am no longer the slave of sin and Satan. I see that my former fancied liberty was a real slavery; that Satan, under the pretext of liberty, had brought me under the most grievous and intolerable bondage. Redeeming love has dispelled the delusion. He who gave his Son to die for me; he who gave himself for me, to redeem me from all iniquity, must love me with unspeakable love, and I give myself joyfully and heartily, gratefully, and wholly to him who has bought me with his blood. My old will is no longer my ruler, God's will is my will, God's law my freedom, God's way the way of holiness, my choice and my way now and evermore.

Thus everything we are and have is consecrated to the Lord; nothing is withheld from him; all is used for him. It is not to devote *part* of, but *all* our property to God; what we use for ourselves and our families being used thus, because it is his will and good pleasure that they should be so used. It is not merely devoting part of our time to God in prayer and reading the scriptures, but devoting all our time for God; what we give to business or pleasure, being so given because it is his will and good pleasure

that that part of our time should be thus employed. It is, in short, to act in everything as the servants of the Lord, and in everything to make it our meat and drink to do his will. Through the new birth, and by the Spirit of God imparted to us, we become "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" thus, believer, no longer "obey sin in the lusts thereof," but seek to follow the direction, "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God," cheered by the animating promise, "for sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace."

Thus the Christian, with all he is, and all he has, is a man set apart for God. "I am for God" is stamped legibly upon him and all his doings. His powers of body and of mind, the feelings of his heart, and the determination of his will; his time, his influence, his talents, his knowledge, his money, his possessions, his family, everything is viewed by him as belonging to God, and consecrated wholly to him.

To this high, and holy, and happy state God designs to bring all his people, and indeed ultimately our whole earth. It is a beautiful description of God's purposes of love to the Jewish nation in setting them apart as a peculiar treasure to himself above all people: "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Through their unbelief, indeed, they have for a season been broken off, but the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance; and we find, in Zechariah, that God's purposes to restored Israel in days to come is, that they should exemplify this holiness in the commonest things in daily use. How sweetly that prophet closes his important and extended predictions! "In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD, and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD OF HOSTS, and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and seethe therein; and in that day

shall there be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts;" thus all their ordinary preparation of food shall be like a sacrifice and a sacrament, and not one Canaanite (or worldly trafficker) be found in the worship of God. Israel, "the righteous nation which keepeth truth;" (Isaiah xxvi. 2.) "the people all righteous;" (Isaiah lx. 21.) "the holy people," (Isaiah lxii.) will thus become a perfect and just specimen of God's purposes of holy love to our fallen race.

For it is not to Israel only that this blessed gift of holiness shall be imparted. To us Gentiles the same love is extended. To mark our consecration to God, it has pleased him to send the gospel through the world, and to appoint the sacred ordinance of baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; which puts the seal of his own name on each believing Gentile as well as on the Jews. It has pleased him also, by his own Spirit, to dwell in his people as in his temple. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits, which are God's." 1 Cor. vi. 19. What a motive is thus furnished to holiness! "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." 1 Cor. iii. 16. 1 Peter ii. 4, 5.

Here, then, is the nature of true holiness. It is the very spirit of heaven; raising men from all the pollution of misery and sin to all the purity and blessedness of angels and archangels, that we may be equal to them, and dwell with them, and rejoice in their rejoicings, and swell their chorus of praise, and behold their visions of glory, and triumph in their hallelujahs, and constantly abide with them in our Father's house, where is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Prayer for Holiness.

Most holy Lord God, my heavenly Father, who has appointed a new and living way in which we may have bold-

ness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, O give unto me, I entreat, that holiness, without which no man shall see thee. Is not my sanctification thy will, O my Father ? hast thou not said, Be ye holy, for I am holy ? Create then, in me, O God, a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me. Send thine own spirit of holiness upon me, that I may be separate from all sin, and entirely and wholly yielded and consecrated, body, soul and spirit unto thee, through Jesus my Redeemer. Amen.

3. HOLY AFFECTIONS TOWARDS GOD.

The Christian has gained a spiritual view of the beauty and glory of God. He says from the heart, " How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty." Zech. ix. 17. " How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God." Psalm xxxvi. " The Holy One of Israel is our King." Psalm lxxxix. 18.

All his holiness, though it be a consuming fire to sin and persevering sinners, is the very bliss and glory of the believer. For while perfect holiness is in itself unspeakably and infinitely beautiful, excellent and glorious ; in Christ Jesus, that holiness, which would otherwise only consume and destroy sinners, has secured the destruction of our sinfulness, and the purification of our nature. Jesus, the refiner and purifier of his people, is now purifying them unto himself, " a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

God has also so graciously revealed this bright and glorious attribute, as to make it the very comfort of the humbled and mourning soul. " For thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa. lvii. 15. As certainly, then, as God is high and lofty, eternal, and most holy, so assuredly shall every bruised soul, every broken and contrite spirit, be revived and re-

newed by him. Under these views holy affections spring up in the believer's heart.

Thus LOVE to the Holy God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Spirit. This is the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." The holiness of God makes this reasonable and practicable, as well as our plainest duty and obligation. His holiness is such as to call forth all our admiration and delight through eternity. "Let them praise thy great and terrible name: for it is holy." Psalm xcix. 3. That holiness, giving a beauty, loveliness, and glory to all his greatness and terror, that justly calls forth the songs of all creation. On this ground the triumphant hosts of his victorious saints praise his name: "They sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints; who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy." Rev. xv. 4.

Thus distinctly is his holiness made the ground of admiration and gratitude, of praise and thanksgiving. Thus are we led to DELIGHT in God's holiness as his excellence and glory.

And in delighting in it, we transcribe it on our hearts: in loving it, we ourselves become partakers of it, and offer the purest and best of worship, that of likeness and conformity to Him whom we worship.

What holiness towards God, then, calls for, is, to contemplate this his beauty more and more, joying in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, till we are changed into his likeness. To behold, with open face, in the glass of the gospel, "the glory of the Lord, till we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Love copies that which it loves. Delight in any one leads us to walk in his ways. And when the believer has long gazed upon the work and glory of the Lord, and prayed, "Let thy work appear unto thy servant, and thy glory unto

their children ; " he cannot but add his longing desires : " Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Psalm xc. 16, 17.

CONFIDENCE in God is another holy feeling which our God justly claims from us. Faith, indeed, begets love, and love increases faith and entire-confidence. The confidence of the child that has no doubt whatever of a parent's love, should be our feeling towards God. The child's sweet reliance on parental care and provision is so strengthened and increased by the daily benefits of a father's constant watchfulness and multiplied supplies for every want, that the child knows there must be wisdom and love in the hardest lessons which it is required to learn. And thus, in the spirit of adoption, the believer is led to cry, " Abba, Father ; " and to repose, with perfect assurance, in God's loving-kindness. Abraham seems never once to have doubted, when called to sacrifice his only son Isaac, that God had any intentions but to benefit and bless both him and his son ; and he went steadily on his journey, and to the very act of obedience, with perfect confidence. Our Lord Jesus Christ, at the very extremity of his distress, manifests this entire confidence : " Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." The titles on which his soul rested in his last prayer were, " Holy Father," and " Righteous Father." John xvii. 11, 35. Nor can anything but a just confidence in his holiness give us peace in the hour of temptation, danger and death.

We would also notice SPIRITUAL WORSHIP, as the last exercise of holy feeling. The highest order of creatures we know are the seraphim and the archangels. The name " seraphim " means, the fiery ones, and the name seems given to them from the ardour and fervour with which they cry day and night, " Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts." Isaiah vi. The characteristic of Gabriel, the angel, was to " stand in the presence of God." (Luke i. 11,) and God seeks for those worshippers " that worship him in spirit and in truth."

Meditation.

Assuredly the feelings of the heavenly host must be the highest and the happiest feelings that I can attain, and all their feelings towards the great God are full of rapture and admiration, confidence and joy, delight and love ; all their feelings are holy feelings. Oh, may I never cease, then, to follow after this heavenly mind. If it be the peculiar blessedness of the pure in heart that they shall see God, may I be constantly looking to Jesus, the purifier of my soul, to be cleansed by his blood, and by his Spirit, from all my sins.

4. HOLY AFFECTIONS TOWARDS MAN.

The God of holiness has given, as his second great commandment, " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ; " here, then, is the character of holiness towards our fellow-men. Real, sincere, hearty, constant love ; the same love which wisdom and righteousness demand for ourselves on a just view of our true interest, is required also towards all men. " He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law." Rom. xiii. 9. " For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this,—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Gal. v. 14. The duty of love is manifestly, then, very comprehensive, and includes in itself the abstaining from every thing that might injure another, and acting always in the spirit of real goodwill towards all men.

The RELATIVE DUTIES which we owe to each other form a large and important part of our daily life, on which the scriptures dwell at much length and repeatedly.

The duties of SUBJECTS towards kings is plainly declared ; such as honour, (1 Pet. ii. 17.) fear, (Prov. xxiv. 21.) obedience, (Tit. iii. 1. Eccles. viii. 2.) and prayer for them. Ezra vi. 10. 1 Tim. ii. 1—3. The apostle Paul dwells at length on what is due to those in authority. Rom. xiii. 1—7. The apostle Peter calls Christians to the same duties. 1 Peter ii. 13—16. Here, then, are holy

feelings towards those above us. All contrary feelings, of despising government, speaking evil of dignities, and reviling our superiors, however common they may be, are perfectly opposed to the holy will of God.

The duty of GOVERNORS and KINGS on the other hand is equally plainly stated ; Exodus xviii. 21, 22. Lev. xix. 15. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4. God also gives them gracious promises connected with their faithfulness to him. Prov. xxix. 2, 4 ; xiv. 10, 28.

The duty of WIVES towards their husbands is stated ; Titus ii. 2—5. 2 Tim. iii. 11. 1 Peter iii. 1—6. 1 Tim. ii. 8—10.

The duty of HUSBANDS to wives. 1 Pet. iii. 7. Ephes. v. 25—33.

The duty of CHILDREN to parents is another part of Christian holiness much insisted on in the word of God. Eph. vi. 1—3. Prov. xxiii. 22. Lev. xix. 3.

The duty of PARENTS is specially weighty, and much blessed of God when fulfilled. Gen. xviii. 19. Deut. xi. 18, 19. Ephes. vi. 4. Joshua xxiv. 15.

The duty of SERVANTS is largely set forth. Titus ii. 9, 10. 1 Peter ii. 18, 19. Ephes. vi. 5—8. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

MASTERS are instructed thus : Ephes. vi. 9. Col. iv. 1. Jer. xxii. 13. James v. 4.

MINISTERS are taught their duties : Acts xx. 16—35, and in Titus and Timothy.

And HEARERS theirs : Luke viii. 5—15. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. Heb. xiii. 17.

Such are the varied relative duties in following which we manifest holy affections towards our fellow men, and bring honour to the name and gospel of our God and Saviour, and stop the blasphemies of those who are hostile to his doctrine.

Prayer for grace to fulfil relative duties.

O my heavenly Father, who hast appointed all the various orders, degrees, and relations of men for the good of the whole, designing thereby the mutual edification of the

whole body of Christ, I pray thee to give me grace to direct my special care and attention to my own duties, and the varied works of love to which my particular station calls me. Let me examine my heart and ways by thy word; wherein I have sinned in times past give me true repentance, and strengthen me by thy grace so to act for the time to come, that I may in all things adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour. Amen.

5. PERSONAL HOLINESS.

Holiness has its seat in the heart; inward graces and holy tempers are its main character. The true Christian, having put on the new man, is "created after God in righteousness and true holiness." Hence when the apostle gives them the titles of "the elect of God, holy and beloved," he bids them as such to "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. Col. iii. 12, 13. The main essentials of this inward character are these three, "faith, hope," and "love." The effects of these graces are truly blessed in producing personal holiness.

Inward PURITY OF MIND may be first noticed. "Blessed are the pure in heart." It is the very preparation for the sight of God and dwelling with him. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." Psalm xxiv. 3, 4. Every thing contrary to this: mere worldly objects aimed at, double-mindedness, selfishness, and ungodliness, are rejected and renounced by the pure in heart. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24. The object of Christ's death for us was that he might present us to God, "holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight." Col. i. 21.

The full FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT may next be noticed as a part of personal holiness, of unspeakable value and blessedness. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temper-

ance." Gal. v. 22, 23. This is beautifully expressed, not as fruits, but as "fruit," a rich cluster of blessings: and as the effect of the Spirit in the heart of man, not of man's fleshly powers, to shew that it is wholly of God's grace.

The GROWTH of every good gift and grace is farther worthy of mercy. "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." 2 Pet. i. 5—7. Such directions may shew us what a noble scope the gospel affords for the utmost zeal and the most constant labours and efforts. There is no end of advance and increase and enlarging blessedness in the school of Christ.

Thus too are you preparing and ripening for that all-important event, the coming of our Lord Jesus. All his grace imparted to you is "to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." 1 Thess. iii. 13.

Meditation.

When shall I attain this inward purity! How infinitely desirable this holy and heavenly state of mind, which makes man angelic in his dispositions even on earth, and meet also for the inheritance of the saints in light! Surely all objects of pursuit in an immortal being are poor and unworthy of his high hopes compared with this of personal, inward holiness. Lord, give me a growing and strengthening desire for holiness as my true happiness.

6. THE DEFECTS OF OUR HOLINESS.

If such be the holiness to which the gospel calls us, surely we, like Isaiah, when he was privileged to behold the Lord sitting on his throne of glory, must each say, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and

I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

In everything we come short; in holy feelings towards God, and towards man, and in personal holiness. Those who think themselves holier than others, saying, "Stand off, for I am holier than thou," are probably the farthest off from real holiness; for deep humility is ever the attendant of holiness; the seraphim veil their faces before the throne. The most holy man we have probably known on earth, after the only perfect pattern, said of himself, "I am the chief of sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15.

In nothing to the spiritual mind is this defect more seen than in those acts which bear the mark of outward holiness. Formality and lip-service, connected with deadness of spirit, worldly thoughts and distractions, vain imaginations and startings aside of the heart in his prayers, make those prayers the most abominable and most humbling of all the Christian's conduct. He cries out, Oh how hateful is my real state to myself, and surely it must be so to him who is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity! What odious hypocrisy, to draw nigh to God with my lips while my heart is far from him! to have the mask of devotion covering the heart of worldliness! To have the sepulchre white without, but within full of vileness.

Are you thus groaning, Christian reader! Know, there is good hope in those very confessions. It is the sign of spiritual life to begin to feel your deadness. It is, too, the experience of God's children; "Ourselves also which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies." Romans viii. 28.

Only be not content with such a state. Keep up the warfare, in the divine strength. Let it be true of you, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," though it be also true: "But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." Remember, the minding of the flesh is death, and the minding of the Spirit is "life

and peace;" and knowing your free aud complete salvation in Jesus, "walk, not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Nor can you have too debasing an idea of your own sinfulness and vileness for these defects of holiness. The holy Job says, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job xlii. The holy Isaiah, longing for better days, and waiting for them, says, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses (notice the plural number, and the comprehensive ALL) are as filthy rags, and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face, and consumed us because of our iniquities." Isaiah lxiv. 6, 7. This is the right view of our best and holiest actions; that self-righteousness may be entirely dethroned, and that, like the apostle Paul, we may for Christ suffer the loss of all things, and be able to say with him, "I do count them but dung (oh most abasing, most just description), that I may win Christ, and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith in him."

And how cheering to the deeply-convinced sinner is that description of the High Priest of Israel! He wore a mitre, upon which was a plate of pure gold, and there was engraven upon it, HOLINESS TO THE LORD, and it was put upon the fore front of the mitre. And when he went into the holy place, he is thus directed, "It shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." Exodus xxviii. 36. Oh precious direction! Let us regard thus our High Priest Jesus Christ before the throne of God with real holiness in our behalf, and be accepted as holy through him; till we attain perfect holiness at his coming.

Confession of Unholiness, and Prayer for Faith in a Free Salvation.

It is indeed most painfully true: I am unholy and unclean! Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I cannot justify myself before thee in any thing. I can only cast myself on the name and merit and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. My thoughts are evil, my heart is desperately wicked, my words are vain, deceitful, and selfish; my whole life tried by thy perfect law in every thing, comes short of the glory of God. My mouth is stopped. I am wholly guilty in thy sight.

Lord, justify me then freely by thy grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. And that I may be justified thus freely, and sanctified by thine own Spirit; oh! give me simple and living faith in the Lord Jesus, who appears perfectly holy in my nature as my High Priest before thee. May I win Christ and be found in him. Hear me for his sake. Amen.

7. THE MEANS BY WHICH HOLINESS IS ATTAINED.

God has made ample provision for our attaining holiness. This was in his purpose from the very beginning; Christians are described as "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Ephes. i. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 13.

Thus deep and secure has God laid the foundation of his people's holiness. It was in the plan of his grace before the world was made. It was the great design of all God's revelations of himself; it is the fruit of the love of Jesus our Lord; it is the effect of the Holy Ghost's operations, and it is attained through belief of the truth.

Let us first notice THE BELIEF OF THE TRUTH as one means of attaining holiness. It was the testimony of David, the "law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;" and as conversion through the word is the beginning of

sanctification, so its progress is carried on by the same means : "as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter i. 22—25 ; ii. 1—3. Our Lord tells his disciples, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you," (John xv. 3,) and he prays for them, "Sanctify them through thy truth : thy word is truth." John xvii. 17. The tendency of all God's word is purifying. Well is it called THE HOLY BIBLE ; being the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of making men holy. Faith is our means of contact and union with the word. Believe it not, and it is a dead letter. Believe it, and it becomes a quickening seed of spiritual and eternal life. Hence you find faith made the great means of holiness ; "Purifying their hearts by faith," (Acts xv. 9,) "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." 1 Peter i. 22. When I believe God's truth, I see the misery, vileness, and abomination of sin ; I see the loveliness and excellence, the blessedness and infinite desirableness of all holiness, and thus by an entire change of mind from my natural state, as far as "the new man" prevails over "the old man," all my thoughts, words, and actions become pure and holy.

Yet, though the truth be God's own instrument for producing this change, it has pleased him, lest we should magnify the instrument instead of himself, and that we might see our sinfulness and weakness more distinctly, and more rejoice in his goodness, not to leave the word alone to be powerful to convert and to sanctify. It is the hammer, but a mighty hand must wield it to break the rocky heart ; it may, as it were, lie by us, close to us, and never once benefit us. Therefore our Lord prays to his Father, "Sanctify them by thy truth ;" and therefore the apostle so rejoices, and gathers thence their "election of God," when he tells the Thessalonians, "for our gospel came unto you not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." 1 Thess. i. 5.

Here, then, is the great strength by which holiness is

attained, THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. And justly has he indeed, above every thing, the emphatic title, Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of holiness (Rom. i. 4), and the only source of holiness in all created beings. By his overshadowing the Virgin, the only perfectly holy child, even our all-perfect Redeemer, was born into the world : " The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." And in all his youth, Jesus " waxed strong in the Spirit ;" at his baptism the Holy Ghost visibly descended on him ; and " through the Eternal Spirit he offered himself" on the cross, a sacrifice " without spot unto God."

By the same Spirit all his followers are sanctified. The first breath of spiritual life is from him ; " That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John iii. 6.

When man becomes thus a partaker of the spiritual nature, he needs constantly to be drawing afresh into his soul, by faith and prayer, this breath of heaven, that the spiritual life of holiness may be maintained and increased. While we are hoping, and waiting, and longing for the redemption of our bodies and the days of perfect holiness, and shall never be satisfied till we awake after God's full likeness, " the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 23—27.

Oh that we may thirst to be baptized with the Holy Ghost! Oh that we may long for these living waters! Free, universal, and most gracious are the invitations of our Divine Master, corresponding to his own heart, wholly full of love to our fallen race. He took the most public and the most crowded of all occasions that he might make his love the more widely known and the more fully manifest. " In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath

said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." John vii. 37—39.

There being this provision made for our holiness, let no man sit down, and say, I can do nothing, I cannot make myself holy. But let every man be roused as with a trumpet. May all men hear the joyful sound, calling them to walk with God, and giving them strength for this high and holy walk. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." If we do thus believe God's great loving-kindness to us and thus act upon it, we may attain, however sinful and weak in ourselves, the fullest light, the highest joy and the highest glory to be gained here below. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound : they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance ; in thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." Psalm lxxxix. 15, 16.

Prayer for Divine Strength.

Almighty Father, altogether free from evil, just, and holy and good, who by the love of parents, though evil to their children, hast taught us that thou wilt much more give thy Holy Spirit to them that ask Thee : bestow on me thy Holy Spirit : sanctify me wholly, and grant that my whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON AFFLICTIONS.

1. The varied afflictions of life—2. The cause of them—3. The improvement of them—4. The healing of them.

1. THE VARIED AFFLICTIONS OF THIS LIFE.

To increase that holiness which is requisite for our eternal happiness, we need affliction (Heb. xii. 10.) and daily conflict with our spiritual enemies.

There are few subjects that come more home to every bosom than that of affliction. Though in the energy and buoyancy of youth, and in the liveliness and joyfulness of fresh hopes, things appear free from sorrow, yet even such have their misgivings, and their seasons of depression. And, without exception, "man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward."

The mercies of God are, indeed, infinitely more numerous. We receive ten thousand mercies for one trial. Every hour and every moment is full of God's goodness; so that the believer can say, "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand." Psalm cxxxix. 17. And, indeed, afflictions, rightly viewed and received, are truly to be reckoned among these precious thoughts of God's love to us.

Yet very varied and multiplied are the afflictions through which we have to pass. Our BODIES are fearfully and wonderfully made, and composed of such numerous parts,

and those so exquisitely delicate and sensitive, that they furnish innumerable means and inlets of pleasure, or of pain. Each of the five senses, seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling, becomes, if diseased or defective, an occasion of suffering. What sorrows and afflictions are connected with blindness and deafness, those labouring under such infirmities well know! The various members of the body may, in a similar manner, from disease or loss, cause us deep suffering. The head-ache, the ear-ache, the tooth-ache, a fit of the stone or of the gout, can disorder the whole frame. Lameness in the feet confines us to our dwelling; and disease in the hands prevents our working. A paralytic stroke disables the whole body. A fever disorders the entire constitution. The most feeble means or instrument employed by God can overwhelm us with dangerous disease and speedy death. The miracle is, not that we have so much sickness, but that, amidst so many things exposing us to its loss, we are preserved in health.

Our MINDS are another fruitful source of affliction. Wonderful is that faculty by which a man thinks and reasons; plans and determines; feels powerful affections, loves and hates, fears and hopes, desires and enjoys. All these, duly regulated, are sources of good and means of blessedness. All these, unregulated by God's will, are sources of sorrow and affliction, and those even deeper and more difficult to be borne than what affects merely the body. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Prov. xviii. 14. Worldly cares and anxieties, disappointed hopes and expectations, mortified pride, neglect, and contempt of our fellow-creatures, their frauds and injuries; the mistakes which we have made, our failures from our own faults and follies, the results of our own selfishness and earthly-mindedness, of our own self-wisdom and self-will, what innumerable sources of bitter affliction are these!

Our FAMILIES AND RELATIONS, those chief means of our domestic and most constant and social happiness, become also chief occasions of trial and affliction. What anguish

rends a parent's heart in the sickness, and danger, and loss, of a beloved child; and what grief a child suffers in the loss of a tender parent! A husband follows the wife of his bosom to the silent sepulchre with a broken heart, and the widow of a departed husband sits in solitary woe. And these are not the greatest of relative sorrows. Many a parent has to say, I had rather have followed my child to the grave, than that he should ruin himself, and dishonour his whole family by such baseness, and extravagance, and wickedness. The higher a man is, and the more he is encircled with the blessings of kindred and friends; the more he is exposed to such sources of sorrow, and he has the oftener to go to the house of mourning, and to weep with them that weep. What family has not also internal disorders; the heads of it, or the inmates of it, or the servants employed by it, either weak or sickly, headstrong or unruly, or, in some other way, causes of affliction to each other!

And if we were free from these varied causes of affliction, who can behold THE AFFLICTIONS OF HIS FELLOW MEN without partaking of them in some degree? Not only as Christians, but as belonging to the one family of man, and descended from one common parent, we cannot but have some share in the sufferings of others: "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." 1 Cor. xii. 26. We see this most vividly and distinctly in an united family, and among true Christians; but it is in its measure true on a larger scale. There cannot be deep poverty among one class, without its affecting another class; there cannot be war between hostile nations without an increase of general suffering; an infectious disorder cannot spread, without each one's being brought nearer to danger. Thus we have an interest, not only in personal and relative afflictions, but in afflictions generally.

And still more, THE SINS OF MEN, as well as his own, which will be more distinctly noticed, cause a Christian many a sigh and many a sorrow of which the world is

ignorant, because it sees not the sure consequence of sin, and the dishonour it puts upon God, and the evil it brings on the sinner, and on all connected with him. Truly "the whole creation" thus "groaneth and travaileth in pain together."

After a striking enumeration of some of the miseries of this life, Bishop Taylor eloquently observes, 'If we could from one of the battlements of heaven espy how many men and women at this time lie fainting and dying for want of bread, how many young men are hewn down by the sword of war, how many poor orphans are now weeping over the graves of their father, by whose life they were enabled to eat; if we could but hear how many mariners and passengers are at this present in a storm, and shriek out because their keel dashes against a rock, or bulges under them; how many people there are that weep with want, and are mad with oppression, or are desperate by too quick a sense of a constant infelicity, in all reason we should be glad to be out of the noise and participation of so many evils. This is a place of sorrows and tears, of great evils and a constant calamity; let us remove from hence, at least in affections and preparation of mind.'

Meditation.

How tremendous an evil must that be which causes all these sorrows! God is the God of power, of wisdom, and of love, and yet such an evil is in man's sinfulness, that all these afflictions are fully requisite to shew its true nature, and stubbornness, and abomination. In every sorrow and suffering, in every agony and distress, may I discern "the sinfulness of sin!"

2. THE CAUSE OF THESE AFFLICTIONS.

The true cause of affliction must be seen to enable us to reap the full benefit which it is designed to communicate. "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." Job v. 6.

Nor has our heavenly Father any pleasure in the sorrows of his creatures. Sinful man may delight in the exercise of tyrannical power, and the oppressor find a barbarous joy in the sufferings of those whom he oppresses. But our God has solemnly sworn by himself that it is not so with him: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. xxiii. 11.

The first cause of affliction is SIN; this is the whole reason, indeed, of any of God's creatures suffering. "Fools, because of their transgressions and because of their iniquity, are afflicted." Psalm cvii. 17. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Lam. iii. 39. The penitent is represented as saying, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." Micah vii. 9. And God graciously shews why he connects afflictions with sin. "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of hosts." Jer. ii. 19.

The history of Israel unveils to us throughout the reason of afflictions. Everywhere you see national affliction following national sins, and personal sorrows following personal sins. Even God's children have to endure chastisements for their sins. David falls into sin, and what a life of affliction is the consequence in his own family, and in his kingdom! What miseries came upon him! "The sword departs not from his house," because he despised God in the iniquity which he had committed. His neglect of his children, and his spoiling them, is punished by their wickedness and his miserable end. Indeed we may truly say that in this life God's children do specially suffer for their sins: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." Amos iii. 2. There is perfect righteousness with God in all his dealings with men. It is only when men are obsti-

nately and wilfully set on sin, that they are left to themselves, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." Hosea iv. 17. "My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me, so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" Psalm lxxxi. 11—13. Calamities without number, from the time of the captivity of the Ten Tribes, even to the present hour, would have been avoided, had they hearkened to the Lord, and walked in his ways!

Though sin, then, is the primary cause of affliction, it will hence appear that GOD'S WISE AND RIGHTEOUS LOVE TO MEN is the deeper and fuller reason for all our afflictions. Just as when a parent punishes a child for a fault that the child has committed, the fault is the primary cause of punishment, but the love of the parent, having respect to the child's best and most enduring good, is the deeper reason of the correction, so it is with our God: only with a fuller wisdom and grace beyond all comparison. "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence, shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live. For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." Heb. xii. 9, 10.

To be without chastisement is to be without one proof of fatherly love and adoption into his family; "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Heb. xii. 6.

Here, then, we have the full reason of all the afflictions through which sinful men pass. There is a stubbornness of evil to be subdued; there is a flinty hardness of sin to be broken; the unsightly mineral has to be purged from its dross in the severe furnace. And when taken out of the furnace, it has to be wrought by many a blow of the hammer and many a sharp application of the suitable instrument, to make it a useful and beautiful vessel for the Master's house. The more, too, the vessel excels in beauty,

the longer and the more painful is the process by which that more perfect beauty is attained.

We cannot indeed now, till the end be accomplished, see the reason for all this previous suffering. A person seeing valuable ore of gold or silver gathered from the mine, and unacquainted with the way of its being purified, might be amazed to see it cast into a heated furnace. He would see something accomplished indeed, in its coming out pure and refined. But when he saw this purified metal put under the powerful hammer, and again and again smitten with heavy blows, he might say, Will it not be dashed to pieces? But still he would, sensible of his ignorance, trust the workman for his wisdom and skill. And shall not we trust him who has both infinite wisdom and boundless love, and who measures every trial and every blow as best for the final good of his children? The reason of all God's dealings with his people has yet to be fully manifested; "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." John xiii. "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it," (1 Cor. iii. 13.) "that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter i. 7.

We may learn from this view not to judge, as Job's friends did of him, that affliction is a mark of special sin, but rather to see that it is a "token for good" and a proof of paternal love. Look at that most eminent servant of God, St. Paul; how he joins together (when writing to Timothy) the holy graces which God had bestowed upon him, and the afflictions through which he had passed. "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions which came on me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all, the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. iii. 10.

Prayer to discern God's design in Afflictions.

Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Help me, as I know that by my sinfulness I have justly merited all my sufferings, so I may discern also clearly and distinctly thy infinite wisdom and boundless love; thou dost not give me up to my sins, but by fatherly chastisements wouldest correct me and make me meet for thy heavenly family. Let me see that in very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me, and wholly submit myself to thy hands through Jesus my Redeemer. Amen.

3. THE RIGHT IMPROVEMENT OF AFFLICTION.

Here is the turning point between a beneficial affliction, and one that leaves the soul more sinful and exposed to severer suffering. Oh that we were wise and understood how vain it is to contend with God, and the extreme folly of refusing to submit to the first stroke of his chastisement!

Afflictions may harden the heart and thus aggravate our guilt, till they issue in our final and everlasting ruin. God's design in them is not so. "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Lam. iii. 33. "But he that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Prov. xxix. 1. We have in the first chapter of Proverbs a very full statement of the way of God's gracious dealings; his earnest invitations, his warm expostulation, his firm reproof and gracious promises, and then man's setting at nought all his counsel, and rejecting all his reproofs, and so, because they despise all his reproofs, perishing without remedy. "For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." Prov. i. 32.

The DESPISING OF AFFLICTIONS is expressly forbidden. "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction." Prov. iii. 11. In some awful

instances of daring and obstinate sinners, God gives them up to their own hardness of heart, and all his judgments and mercies too, every blow and every respite from a blow, are the righteous occasion of increasing hardness of heart before final destruction. Such persons are monuments of God's power and wrath, to deter others from sin. Pharaoh was a memorable instance of this: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared through the earth." O how terrible a state is that of hardened and impenitent sinners, receiving affliction upon affliction, and still contending against God in a vain contention, and at length consigned by his righteous wrath to everlasting ruin!

This judgment is God's "strange work." Isaiah xxviii. 21. It comes after the failure of all other remedies. How long his fatherly chastisements corrected Israel! He himself testifies, "Why should ye be stricken any more, ye will revolt more and more;" and then he enumerates the wounds and bruises which had been in vain inflicted on them. This led at length to their rejection and lengthened captivity. "The Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his word, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till THERE WAS NO REMEDY, therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees." 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15—17.

Oh, Christian reader! when we consider the power of the Almighty to punish; the endless means that he has to crush all rebellion, and the infinite long-suffering and patience which he has hitherto manifested, how should we humble ourselves and flee from the wrath to come!

But there is another misusing of affliction; sinking and FAINTING UNDER CHASTISEMENT. We are bid also "not to faint" when "we are rebuked of him." Many of God's eminent saints have been in danger of this. Thus Joshua

was ready to faint at the discomfiture of Israel. Joshua vii. 7—9. Thus, David was ready to faint at the smiting of Uzzah. 2 Sam. vi. 8, 9. Even the apostle Paul was almost in this danger. 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. Job severely felt this temptation through his lengthened trial.

And, indeed, when left to ourselves, how little can we bear up under the trials of this life! We see, we feel, we groan under the present affliction, which darkens all our hopes, and withers all our enjoyments. But we see not, through our unbelief of God's word, his wisdom and love in our trials: we wait not, through our impatience and irritability, the issue of them: we rejoice not in hope of the glory of God, because we lose sight of God's precious promises.

Let us then look at all the saints of God from the beginning, and see how, "through much tribulation," they entered the kingdom of God. St. James tells us, "Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

This leads us to point out distinctly the right use of affliction. And that we may be strengthened for our duty in this, we must first LOOK UNTO JESUS, and gather our chief encouragement from his glorious example. "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds." Heb. xii. 3. He is our Master, he is our Leader. He went by the cross to the crown: he fixed his eye on the joy set before him, and so patiently "endured the cross, despising the shame." It is the very token and badge of our discipleship. He has told us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." He has also told us, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." But we know too, that "if we suffer, we shall also reign with him."

PATIENCE is then a real improvement of affliction. "If

ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons." The first and natural effect of sharp trials and afflictions is to produce impatience and to provoke wrong tempers and unholy passions ; but, if, knowing our free justification by faith, " we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," then the very reverse of this is the happy issue ; " tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." Rom. v. 3.

Entire SUBMISSION, saying from the heart " the will of the Lord be done," is another due reception of affliction. God " giveth grace to the humble, submit yourselves therefore to God." James iv. 6, 7. " Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." 1 Peter v. 6. This is the posture of one who believes and loves : my Father has done and will do all things well. I know whom I believe. I am sure of his wisdom and his righteousness in everything, and I yield myself entirely to his disposal. What sweet peace does such resignation produce in the heart !

But the scriptures seek to raise us to yet higher blessedness, JOY IN AFFLICTION. " My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations ; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James i. 2—4. It is the triumph of Christian grace to make the worst things of this world, so the very best things to our souls' welfare, that we can thank God for them. It is a great thing to be " rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer," (Rom. xii. 12,) but it is a still higher degree of grace to " glory in tribulation also," (Rom. v. 3,) " to be exceeding joyful in all our tribulation," (2 Cor. vii. 4,) to be able to say, " I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." 2 Cor. xii. 10. So mightily can the grace of God change the very character of affliction.

Once more, the right improvement of affliction is to GLORIFY GOD IN OUR TRIALS. And this we do when we ac-

knowledge both his righteousness and goodness in them; and earnestly seek that all his designs of love should be accomplished by them, by our souls being purified and sanctified through them. It is his express command, "Glorify ye the Lord in the fires." Isaiah xxiv. 15. When the third part of Israel, in days yet to come, are brought through the fire, and refined as silver and gold, we read, "they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Zech. xiii. 9. Habakkuk thus glorified God, when amidst the failure of all earthly joys, he only took the more occasion to testify, "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Hab. iii. 18. So David glorified God when he humbly submitted to Shimei's curses, seeing in them God's righteousness. The great fault of nominal Christians in this day has been, that amidst all the pouring out of the vials "they repented not, to give God glory." Rev. xvi. 9. May we then see and acknowledge the loving-kindness of God in all his dealings with us, and be especially careful to honour his holy name.

Prayer for grace rightly to receive affliction.

O my God, by whose grace alone so weak and polluted a creature can please thee or be kept from sinning against thee, suffer me not either to harden my heart by despising thy chastening, or to faint when rebuked of thee. Give me grace to look stedfastly unto the Lord Jesus, who, made perfect through suffering, is now seated at thy right hand, and may I in his spirit of patience, submission, and rejoicing in the happy issue of sufferings, go through my far less sorrows, seeking only in all to glorify, as he did, thy holy name. Hear me for his sake. Amen.

4. THE HEALING OF AFFLICTIONS.

How may we most effectually have the stroke of affliction removed, and the wound of affliction healed? Simply

by returning to the Lord. This is made very plain in many directions of scripture.

There may be a false healing, founded on false principles, very dangerous and very delusive. Jeremiah speaks thus against the prophets and priests of his day, "They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Jer. vi. 14. Ezekiel calls this, building a wall, "and daubing it with untempered mortar," so that it falls down when the showers come. Ezek. xiii. 10—12. Our Lord also compares it to a building "a house on the sand," that cannot abide the storm.

All mere palliatives of human invention are of this character. When the blame is laid by us on others, rather than on ourselves; when our fancied amendment is made the ground of our hopes; when our attention to the external decencies of religion is only made a cover for our real alienation of heart from God, all this is false healing. When good is expected merely from man, and relief looked for only from an arm of flesh, however promising or flattering the prospect be, it is a false healing: "Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee; and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity, but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment." Lam. ii. 14.

All such false healing will only in the result occasion deeper wounds and sorrows. These palliatives may be delightful for the moment to the natural heart, but in the result they are very prejudicial and ruinous.

REAL HEALING comes in quite another way; in the discovery of our deep sinfulness and wickedness; in humbling ourselves on this account before God, and in returning to him with the whole heart. His gracious invitation, putting the very words of return into our mouth, is, "Come, let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up; after two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Hosea vi. 1, 2.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only effectual Physician who heals every wound. Our sorrows are caused by our sins, and we are too proud to see and acknowledge the painful truth. To meet this extreme corruption of human nature, one altogether without sin, one so exalted as to be above all involuntary suffering, came from heaven. He is the only-begotten Son of God, and one with God, and yet "he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." This amazing expression of divine love melts our corrupt hearts entirely by its exceeding grace and loving-kindness, and discovers to us the cause and the evil of our disease, without arming against our real interests, our prejudices. It shews us, in the sufferings of another, what sin really is, and so opens the way for our truly seeing our own character, and God's character, and loathing and abhorring ourselves for our vileness. Thus "by his stripes we are healed, not only as he atoned for all our guilt, and has procured the free remission of all our sins, but as our mind is brought to a right state. We are thus enabled to view God's dealings with us in their just light, as the dealings of paternal love; and the way is prepared, either for the removal of afflictions, by their having answered their designed end, or, if it be to our profit that they should be continued, for their becoming both greater and fuller blessings. They become such by present sanctification, and by preparing for us a richer crown of glory hereafter—working now so as to produce peaceable fruits "of righteousuess," and also "working out for us hereafter a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

This is the true healing of affliction; when we can feel that we are in the hands of a skilful physician, whose remedies, if painful, are wise and healing, and who prefers our future and established health to any merely transient and temporary revival, that leaves us only the more weak and disabled afterwards. Such a skilful Physician, Christian reader, is that blessed Saviour, to whom we would recommend you to apply in every sorrow, from a personal experience of his ability to save. It is not a vain thing; it is

a reality ; it is an incalculable blessing. He can, he really does accomplish his appointed office, " to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Isaiah lxi. 2, 3.

Prayer for the healing of Afflictions.

O Lord Jesus, thou Son of David, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, and who never rejected any that came to thee, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee ; help me so to contemplate thy wounds and bruises, thy sufferings and death for my sins, that I may see sin to be the worst of all evils, and look to thee for complete deliverance and sanctification ; hear me for thy name's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE CHRISTIAN CONFLICT.

1. Conviction of Sin—2. The Inward Warfare—3. The Benefit of it—4. The Victory of the Soul.

1. CONVICTION OF SIN.

THERE are deeper afflictions, however, than those which merely affect the body, or relate only to this world, and to our present state ; I mean conviction of our sinfulness before God, and of our spiritual danger through sin.

This heavy trouble, which so little affects the worldly mind, that it can hardly be understood ; or if understood is only known as a temporary and groundless alarm, is to the Christian a constant source of humiliation and affliction. The Psalms, especially those called penitential ; and such as vi. xxxii. xxxviii. xxxix. xli. xlii. li. lxxiv. lxxvii. lxxix. lxxxv. cii. cxxx. cxliii. sufficiently prove this. It is a real knowledge of " the plague of our own heart. 1 Kings viii. 38. David compares it to " broken bones." Psalm li. 8. He says, " Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me." Ps. cxix. 143. St. Paul says, " O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? " Rom. vii. 24.

Convictions of sin are ordinarily the first work of the Spirit in the sinner's heart. " When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin—of sin, because they believe not on me." John xvi. 8, 9. Yet these convictions, while they take, indeed, a deeper and more evangelical cha-

racter, mark the Christian's path till he lies down in the grave.

There is first much of terror and alarm : or at least of anxiety and uneasiness of mind. When the understanding is enlightened to see the majesty and holiness, the purity and excellence of God : the spirituality and extent, and yet the perfect reasonableness of his holy law ; when the quickly-coming judgment, with all its strictness and impartiality, publicity and perfect righteousness, and with its never-ending consequences, the eternal fire or the eternal glory, are really known and believed, who that knows himself can but tremble ? Even Felix, when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, trembled before his prisoner, and could not bear the subject. Even a temporary alarm and an earthquake made the jailor fall trembling before Paul and Silas, and say, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?"

Yet many are thus far alarmed, and go no further. Ahab humbled himself ; Judas repented ; some for "a while believe, but in time of temptation fall away." Convictions of sin that are saving, are connected with the sense of the evil of another sin, that the worldly mind little regards,—the sin of not believing in Christ ; the most heinous reality of all our sins, when the full truths of his glorious gospel have been distinctly set before us. This is the condemning sin of lands where the light of revelation shines, that makes it come to pass that it is "more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah," than for those who reject the gospel." Luke x. 12. Our Lord states this unbelief as the special condemnation of men. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John iii. 10.

But great as this evil is, we need to be awakened to a sense of it by divine teaching, and the convictions of sin under this teaching are indeed truly humbling and confounding, leading to self-loathing and abhorrence.

To see and know that God should make such a wonder-

ful provision of love as not to spare his own Son, but " deliver him up for us all," and yet we should slight it all, and despise and reject it !—to discern the record that " God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son ; and yet that we should have insulted this amazing love by not believing this record, and so in reality have committed the aggravated sin of " not believing God, and have made him a liar." 1 John v. 10, 11. Here is the highest character of sin's abomination. Heb. vi. 4—8 ; x. 26—30.

And if Satan have tempted us in our ignorance, as he did St. Paul, to be " a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious, we shall, when brought to the knowledge of God's love in Christ Jesus, like that blessed apostle, count ourselves " the chief of sinners " because of such opposition to the truth and church of God.

The goodness of God in sparing us, forgiving all our sins, and at length restoring us, is that which most breaks the hard heart, most effectually leads to repentance, and brings us at last to " loathe ourselves in our own sight for all the evil " that we have done. Ezek. xx. 43.

Prayer for Conviction of Sin.

O Lord, how hard is my heart ! how little impressed either by judgments or mercies ! Send then at length thine own Spirit to convince me of my sins, and especially of the evil heart of unbelief, the soul-ruinous sin. Take away, according to thy precious promise, the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh ; that humbling myself under thy mighty hand, I may be a partaker of thy precious promises through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

2. THE INWARD WARFARE.

How little at the commencement of a Christian life does the Christian know himself ! There is so much joy in believing, so much happiness to be found in the freshness of Christian truths, and in the liveliness of Christian hope, that his soul is carried through all the difficulties which

first beset his path, and he thinks of little but a joyful and triumphant career to heavenly glory. The flesh seems dead, and only the spirit to be living and vigorous. So good is our God, often to give, at the beginning, this joy in Christ, to strengthen us in our first commencement of our spiritual course.

But this state of things does not ordinarily continue very long. It is needful to run the race, and in doing so, every weight, and "the sin that so easily besets us," must be laid aside. It is needful to fight "the good fight of faith," and then all our spiritual enemies are roused to oppose us.

That we may see more distinctly the nature of this warfare, let us remember that while an entire change within the soul has been made by the new birth, the old and corrupt nature of man still remains; and till death, these two, the flesh and the spirit, subsist in the same man; "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." We shall find continually in the scriptures, these two parts co-existing together in the converted man. One is called "the old man," and the other "the new man," and we are to "put off the old man which is corrupt," and "to put on the new man, which is created after God." Ephes. v. 22—24. One is called the flesh, and the other the spirit, and we are told "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

In these conflicting powers in our own soul, it must be our constant aim to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts," and to walk after the Spirit, and bring forth its fruits. Here is the grand warfare, full of daily strife and continual conflicts, the outward and the inward man ever wrestling against each other. "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, (that is, in the flesh or outward man) warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." Rom. vii. 22, 23.

It must not be mistaken for the warfare between pas-

sion and reason, which we see in unconverted men ; and which is often connected with pride, high-mindedness, and vain-glory. This warfare is not merely against vices and immoralities, but it is against every thing that is contrary to the will of God, however highly approved of men. "We do not war after the flesh : for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. x. 3—5.

And, oh how repeated are the defeats ; how humbling are the falls, how slow is the progress, nay how apparently retrograde or backward is the course of this sharp and painful war ! We lose our watchfulness, we neglect prayer, we go into the way of temptation, we give the enemy continual advantages against us, and it is owing to constant miracles of mercy and grace, love and strength, that we are enabled still to stand, and still to fight, clothed with that Christian armour which God has provided for us.

The struggle between self-righteousness and SIMPLE FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST as our only and complete Saviour, is a constant warfare. Oh, how hard it is to renounce in every thing our own righteousness, to submit wholly to God's righteousness ! Rom. ix. 30—33. The blessed apostle Paul, to the end of his days, seems to have been following this. Phil. iii. 9. We are full of pride, self-wisdom and self-righteousness. We cannot get out of our carnal hearts all the remains of fancied merit and strength, and so lose the real love, joy, and peace which we might attain by simple faith in God's free salvation.

The same struggle exists in following after HOLINESS. Surrounded with sensible objects, in the midst of the full and mighty stream of this world, ever flowing in the course of "the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind ;" how hard and persevering are the efforts requisite to withstand that stream, and to rise, against all its force, to pure, holy and spiritual affections, and a

heavenly life ; especially when so much within constantly urges us to carnal and self-indulgent gratifications.

Prayer for aid in the Christian warfare.

O thou who art my victorious leader and the very captain of my salvation, succour me with divine power ; may I be conqueror through him that loved me. Thine eye is upon me. Thy promise is sure : Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life. Help me in thy strength to overcome all my enemies for thy name's sake. Amen.

3. THE BENEFITS OF THE WARFARE.

Painful as is this warfare, the benefits of it are very great. Oh, how little idea had we, before it commenced, of the power of our corruption, and of the stubbornness of our sin, and of the evil of its nature, and of our infinite obligations to Christ who has redeemed us from sin.

The long conflict which we have to maintain with the same corruptions, the repeated falls we get through the same sins, the resolutions broken again and again, the plans formed deliberately, and left unexecuted through our self-indulgence, the duties omitted from week to week, though we are deeply sensible it was through mere indolence they were not performed ; by degrees weaken and destroy our self-confidence and vain glory, and lay us in the dust of self-abasement before God.

We learn at length we have no strength in ourselves ; " we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves." Nothing but painful experience will effectually teach us this. We admit it in theory ; we confess it with our lips ; but fall after fall, disappointment after disappointment, are requisite to bring us really to feel that without Christ we can do nothing.

Hence, also, great sympathy, charity, and tenderness towards others, mark the experienced Christian. His own failures make it impossible for him to be severe and harsh

towards them. The apostle speaks very feelingly to spiritual Christians, when he tells them, " Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. vi. 1.

Our sense of the VALUE OF CHRIST, and our esteem for him is greatly enlarged. " Unto you which believe, he is precious ;" so precious that all things else are counted worthless and vile, compared with him. We see that we cannot have a shadow of hope, but in his free and complete salvation ; that he is and must be all in all for us ; that without him we are lost for ever ; and he, he only is " the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." He too has passed through all this inward conflict, and can fully sympathise with us. See the account of what passed in the garden of Gethsemane ; his soul exceeding sorrowful unto death ; his falling on his face ; his earnest cries and repeated prayers ; his fearful agony ; his sweat as it were great drops of blood. And let us learn in all this that he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Hence we are led also to ADMIRE THE GRACE OF GOD ; first in sparing such sinful creatures from day to day : " it is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not ;" (Lam. iii. 22.) he keeps us still in the way heavenward ; he suffers us not to fall back to perdition ; he leaves us not to our own evil hearts, but we still continue " though faint, yet pursuing " the things which make for our peace. We may further admire that grace in all the blessings which surround us, who are " less than the least of all God's mercies." How constant, and multiplied, and rich, the blessings temporal and spiritual which he showers down daily upon us, though so unworthy of any favour ! And yet more may we admire the grace of God, that he should use such weak and feeble beings as his instruments of good towards others : that when worthy of nothing ourselves, he should not only bless us, but use us vessels of mercy to convey his grace

to others, and make us blessings to our fellow-creatures, notwithstanding all our inconsistencies and corruptions. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 2 Cor. iv. 7.

Another benefit of this warfare is, that our "AFFECTIONS thus become SET ON THINGS ABOVE. Our course through the wilderness is so humbling; the increasing discovery of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of our hearts is so painful; the constant struggle with inward and outward evil is such a daily death, (2 Cor. iv. 11, 12.) that "though our outward man perish, and the inward man is renewed day by day," yet the severity of this conflict leads us to look at the things which are not seen and are eternal, and to fix our eyes more and more on the prize of our high calling. Thus we come more to feel that we are strangers here, and that our real home is in heaven: we are more weaned from this world and so made more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Prayer to gain these benefits.

O Lord, let not all my humbling experience of my wickedness and insufficiency be without real profit. May I be emptied of pride and high-mindedness; may I be more tender-hearted towards others; may I prize Christ more, and may my affections be set on things above, for Jesus's sake. Amen.

4. THE VICTORY OF THE SOUL.

The victory in the result is sure to every believer. When the apostle asks, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" he answers with confidence, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Sin shall not triumph: it shall not for ever tyrannize over us, we are under grace, and true grace shall fully and effectually triumph. And in the prospect we may already say, "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The very maintenance of grace in the heart of man is a triumphant manifestation of divine power ; it is like maintaining a real fire in the midst of the waves of the ocean ; nothing but constant supplies of omnipotent energy could accomplish this work. And how precious the assurance, "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it to the day of Christ."

The MEANS by which the war is maintained by us, to a successful issue, are brought before us in the description of the Christian armour ; that armour which God has provided for our complete protection as well as for the overthrow of our spiritual enemies. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Eph. vi. 14—18. Every part of this armour we need to put on daily that we may "stand against the wiles of the devil." Diligently then should we attend to our armour, that we may not only know what it is, but possess and wear all its parts, and wield the effective sword provided for us.

Many are the stages of victory in this conflict, the deepening humility, the growing self-distrust, the increasing tenderness towards others, the enlargement of love, the greater simplicity of faith, the more entire self-renunciation, the glorying in Christ alone, the larger consideration of the spiritual wants of others ; these and many other such graces shew that the carnal man is weakening and dying, and the spiritual man is growing stronger.

And see how at the close of his spiritual warfare a valiant champion of the faith expresses himself, "The time of my departure is at hand ; I have fought a good fight ; I have finished my course ; I have kept the faith : hence-

forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. What a victory is this, and what a glorious prospect of the completed triumph in the heavenly country, and full reward from the mightiest of all beings ! O may we bend our strength, Christian reader, to follow him as he followed Christ.

But we must go yet farther to see the full and completed triumph. The day of the resurrection is the day of final victory. " When this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory." 2 Cor. xv. 6—8. O how inconceivably glorious the triumph of the victorious soul in that day ! the last of the promises of the seven churches sets it before us in all its divine majesty and inexpressible glory. " To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne." Rev. iii. 21. Let us but have faith in the divine promises, and here is an object incomparably worthy of all sacrifices, losses, sufferings, and labours, and one which makes them all even desirable, to attain this exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Prayer for victory.

O Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty conqueror of sin, death, the grave, and hell, give me to partake of thy glorious victories ; then shall I be satisfied only when I wake up after thy likeness, wearing thine image, thy name upon my forehead, and being with thee in thy glory for ever. Never leave nor forsake me ; make me faithful unto death, and at length give me the crown of life, for thy name's sake.

CHAPTER XVI.

SPIRITUAL JOY.

1. The Preparation for this Joy—2. The chief source of it—3. Its Nature —4. Its Perfection—5. Its Influence on this Life—6. Its Attainment.

1. THE PREPARATIONS FOR SPIRITUAL JOY.

GOD does not commonly impart joy to his people without having first led them through darkness and sorrow. The bondage in Egypt precedes the deliverance through Moses. The encompassing of the mountains, and the opposing waves of the sea, and the following of Pharaoh's armies, precede the triumphant passage through the Red Sea, and the entire overthrow of their oppressors. The forty years' journeying in the wilderness goes before the victories that secure the land of Canaan; the seventy years' captivity precedes the ransomed of the Lord returning to Sion with songs. The world's best things come first, and are soon ended; God's best things come last, and endure for ever.

What, then, ordinarily precedes spiritual joy? We have seen in former chapters, the holiness of the believer and his afflictions; we have seen his convictions of sin and his spiritual warfare; and though joy mingles with all, and goes before them even as well as follows them, (for the Holy Ghost distributes to every one at such times, and in such measures, as he in his infinite wisdom and love pleases) yet ordinarily times of darkness, and tears, and faith, and waiting, precede the times of joy.

Times of DARKNESS, we all have in this world. There is a natural darkness in which men in an unconverted state are living, full of ignorance and full of error (John i. 5), from which they are delivered by the death of Christ, and out of which they are "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." Col. i. 13. And besides this, there is a season of temptation and trial, which our Saviour calls the hour of wicked men and "the power of darkness." Luke xxii. 53. Thus his agony and cross precede his resurrection and ascension. A person really fearing God and obeying the voice of his servant, may be one "that walketh in darkness and hath no light." The Jews, just before our Saviour came, were in this state. Of them it is said, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." Matt. iv. 16. Thus a time of great darkness of soul, as it precedes, so it leads us to value light. The shipwreck increases the joy of safety and deliverance. The escape from fire makes security doubly precious. When the jailor was in despair, the joyful sound, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," first reached his heart. Be not then discouraged by present darkness, but "trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon your God." Remember, the morning succeeds the darkest night.

Times of SORROW also are preparatory for times of joy. Thus it is foretold: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Our Saviour has numbered therefore the mourners among the happy: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matt. v. 4. A real conviction of our sinfulness and guilt, and a real view of our vileness and ingratitude, David compares to nothing less than "broken bones," (Psalm li. 1, 8), but he prays that those bones may yet rejoice. A lively sense of our danger of eternal condemnation and everlasting wrath, justly merited by our sins, and our own unutterable folly

and wickedness in disregarding this danger, these things prepare our hearts to welcome with joy and gratitude the good tidings of the salvation of Christ. When we are empty of self, and see all our need and spiritual wickedness, then Christ and his riches and grace are seasonable, surprising and suitable, and affect the heart with its deepest emotions of gladness and thankfulness: "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John xvi. 20.

Times of FAITH necessarily then also precede times of joy. Though the gospel be "good tidings of great joy to all people," yet till the gospel be known and believed, it cannot give us personal joy. We fell by unbelief into darkness and misery; we rise by faith into light and happiness. After the apostle had recited the promises of Christ's reigning over the Gentiles, and their trusting in him, he directly prays, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Romans xv. 13. The reason why there is little joy is, that there is little faith. The Bible is so rich a treasury of joyful truths, it abounds so in precious promises and full statements of God's loving-kindness, it opens such boundless scenes of blessedness and glory to God's people, that it is only love of sin and unbelief that can keep us from true peace and happiness. David says, "Our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name." Psalm xxxiii. 21.

Yet we may have to WAIT FOR A SEASON. This often goes before enjoyment: as David says, "I waited patiently" for the Lord, before he says, "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God." Psalm xl. 1, 3. Simeon waited for the consolation of Israel, before he held the infant Saviour in his arms, and could say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." Luke ii. 25. That we may value blessings the more when they are given, and know better the real Giver, this season of waiting is appointed, and how blessed the result of patient waiting: "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the

eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." Isaiah lxiv. 4.

Once more, the precious GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST, is the most needful of all other gifts to fill us with joy. He can dispense with every other preparation, and at once pour into our hearts a joy unspeakable and full of glory: "Joy in the Holy Ghost" is an essential part of the kingdom of God. Rom. xiv. 17. The Saviour gives "the oil of joy for mourning." Isaiah lxi. 3. The churches having rest, and "walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Acts viii. 31. When the disciples are "filled with joy," it is an evidence that they are "filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts xiii. 52. 1 Thess. i. 7. Would we then have much spiritual joy, we must abound much in prayer for this special gift of God, which the Saviour so freely bestows on them that ask. John iv. 10.

Meditation.

Let me have large expectations from the love of my God, and notwithstanding all present darkness and gloom, hope even against hope that there may yet be light, and joy and peace to my soul. That I may gain these blessings, may I really believe the grace which Jesus Christ has brought, and wait on God, and receive largely the gift of the Holy Spirit. God's word cannot fail, let me rest upon it now and evermore.

2. THE CHIEF SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL JOY.

The apostle in the plain command shews us both the duty and the source of constant spiritual joy: "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice." Phil. iv. 4.

Christ Jesus, our Lord, is our joy; or in the emphatic language of David, "God, my exceeding joy." Psalm xliii. 4. The true joy of the immortal soul, little as the world may think it to be so, and much as men may scorn it, is only to be found in communion with our risen Lord and

Saviour. The world has committed two destructive evils, they have "forsaken" this "fountain of living waters," and "they have hewn out broken cisterns that can hold no water."

To explore all the riches of Christ and the unfathomable ocean of blessedness in him, will be our happy employment through eternity. It is therefore but a very small part that we can now attain, but that little is infinitely more than all that this world can give.

If LOVE is one spring of joy, think of the unequalled love of Jesus! What thoughts of love he had in our creation and recovery, from everlasting, before the earth was formed! He describes himself as "rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men." Proverbs viii. 31. When he came in our nature, what grace was manifested! He left a scene of glory unutterable, for a scene and course of humiliation which never can be paralleled; for where else can such dignity stoop to such abasement? The Father loved the world and gave his Son. The Son loved our fallen race, and gave himself for us. See him incarnate in our nature, a child, a youth, subject to earthly parents, in poverty, in sorrow, in temptation, in agony, dying, dying on the cross, praying for his murderers! O love beyond comparison! Let it gladden our hearts. For yet he is the same. Ascended and at the right hand of his Father, his love has never varied. He died for his enemies; he lives for his enemies; "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Soon, very soon now, he will return in personal glory to reward all his faithful followers, and to make them joint heirs in his glory.

If RELATIONSHIP is a source of joy, O what gracious relations he sustains to those who do the will of God. He is the bridegroom, we are the bride: he is the husband who loved the church, and gave himself for it, and nourishes and cherishes it. He is the everlasting Father who brings his sons to glory; he is the elder brother, who loves all his brethren; he is the beloved friend who keeps nothing back

from us. His disciples are to him mother and brethren; for he says, "whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother." Matt. xii. 50. Christ "is all in all." And if deprived of all other relations, you attain this one relationship, you find an hundredfold more even in this time, "brethren and sisters and mothers and children." Mark x. 30.

If VARIETY OF GOOD can be a source of joy, this you have in Christ Jesus beyond all comparison. He has unsearchable riches. Prov. viii. 18. Eccles. iii. 8. Pleasures without end. Psalm xvi. 11. Beauty without defect. Psalm xlv. 2. Eloquence to instruct and comfort. Isaiah l. 4. Cant. v. 16. Graces more precious than perfumes. Cant. i. 3; iii. 6. Knowledge of infinite excellence. Phil. iii. 8. Glory inconceivable. Psalm xxiv. John xvii. 24. Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, every good, is in Christ.

If FULNESS OF GOOD can make us joyful, this there is in Christ for us: for "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the round world, and they that dwell therein." Ps. xxiv. 1. It has "pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Col. i. 19. There is joy in him, and it is "fulness of joy." Psalm xvi. 11. John xvi. 22. There is grace in him, and it is "fulness of grace." John i. 16. He is ever present. Matt. xxviii. 20. He is "altogether lovely," and the chief treasure. All other good things are but pictures and emblems, of which he is THE REAL SUBSTANCE. He only can say, I am the true vine. I am the good shepherd. I am the bread of life. The sun, the bright and morning star; the tree of life, the way, and the light. Every thing that is really valuable has a fuller value as leading us to and showing us something of the fulness of good in Christ Jesus.

The WHOLE COMPANY OF SAINTS with one voice ACKNOWLEDGE the joy to be found in Christ Jesus. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day," says Christ, "and he saw it and was glad." John viii. 5. David, in the full experience of

it, calls on all others to partake of it. "O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands." Psalm c. 1. Mary, the virgin, so highly favoured among women, finds this her chief joy. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Luke i. 46, 47. The eunuch of Queen Candace, directed to Christ and believing in him, goes on "his way rejoicing." Acts viii. 40. When the people of Samaria had Christ preached unto them, "there was great joy in that city." Acts viii. 8. Patriarchs, prophets, kings, apostles, and martyrs, in every age, amidst all their sufferings, find their joy in Christ: bearing up their souls and leading them to take all their losses and temptations as fresh occasions of thanksgiving and joyfulness, being endured for his sake.

Here, then, here only is the chief source of joy.

Prayer to know Christ.

O thou divine Redeemer, who hast said, no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father; though the full riches of thy grace and glory be unfathomable and unsearchable, yet give unto me grace to know something of that love which passeth knowledge, and to grow and increase in this knowledge day by day. May it be given unto me of the Father to be drawn to thee, to come unto thee, and see thee as thou art, till that day of bliss arrive, when I shall know even as also I am known, and evermore be with thee. Amen.

3. THE NATURE OF TRUE JOY.

How universally, how eagerly, and how incessantly men pursue shadowy joys, and think they are following a reality! there is indeed a "shew of wisdom" and good in them; and if followed, used, and enjoyed only according to the will of God and as his blessings, we may have real comfort in them; for "God has given us all things richly to enjoy." But these joys made the rest of the sonl, and the chief end of pursuit, mar the whole, and deprive us of

the very refreshment and comfort which might otherwise be communicated to us by them.

Seek not, then, Christian reader, your joy in wealth and greatness,—it is not there; but cares, anxieties, and mortifications are there. Seek it not in luxuries and sensual pleasures,—real joy is not there, but emptiness and disgust and weariness are there. Seek it not even in varied knowledge, and those earthly attainments which so much distinguish one man from another; valuable as these are in their place and measure, and greatly as they may increase our usefulness, if they are rested in as the great object of pursuit, the wisest of men has told us that "vanity and vexation of spirit" are inscribed on all. Seek it not even mainly in the bosom of your family; though it be the highest and most innocent earthly bliss, it must not be idolized.

And if it be not in these things which form the chief objects of pursuit in the more respectable classes of society; what shall we say of those low and wretched pursuits of both higher and lower classes; those brutish lusts in which the wicked imagine joy; gluttony and drunkenness, licentiousness, and gambling, and all those vain pleasures with which this world deludes its followers, under the outward shew of happiness. We can only say they are "led captive by Satan at his will," and must be so, till they look to the only true deliverer of the soul, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes, even for the worst, in this day of grace, joy is provided, if they will seek it in God's way. Let me endeavour to set it forth in its real nature.

Joy is gladness of heart in security against evil things, and the possession of good things. It is the happiness of the soul in the attainment of real, solid, and enduring good. And this, Christian reader, is provided for you in the gospel of Christ. The fullest joy that a human bosom can contain is to be found in communion with God, through Jesus Christ.

What are the characters of this joy. It is the JOY OF SALVATION. How often do the scriptures set it before us in this light, "I will rejoice in thy salvation." Psalm ix. 14;

xiii. 5; xx. 5; xxi. 1. &c. And how great that salvation is will never be known till it be declared in the day of the judgment, and its loss seen in the eternal woe of the wicked, and its gain seen in the eternal blessedness of the righteous. But the reality of the salvation is a present blessing. "By grace ye are saved." Prayers of this kind are common in the Psalms: "O visit me with thy salvation; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." What greater joy, then, can there be than to know that we are among the saved ones, "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ!" This joy Christ gives unto us. May we then with joy draw "water out of the wells of salvation!" Isaiah xii. 3.

It is the JOY OF HOLINESS. Its chief employ being communion with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, it is eminently a holy joy. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 11. Thus David says, "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." Psalm xcvii. 12. It is, indeed, a remarkable effect of divine power and love that a sinful creature can be so changed as to rejoice in God's holiness, which is most of all contrary to sin. This marvellous change the grace of God in Christ Jesus does truly accomplish.

It is the JOY OF GLORY. Poor and mean are the joys of this world, even when they are not sensual and vicious. Oh the little things that raise our animal spirits and gladden our carnal hearts! But spiritual joy takes large and comprehensive views, and goes at once to the highest objects of faith and hope, God and his Christ; "whom having not seen we love, and in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter i. 8. It looks above and sees our Father in heaven reconciled and full of love, and "in the spirit of adoption cries, Abba, Father." It looks backwards and "rejoices because our names are written in heaven," (Luke x. 20.) in the book of life, of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. xiii. 8. It looks aronnd and sees "all things working together for our good." Rom.

viii. 23. It looks forward and sees the returning Bridegroom, the coming King, his glorious kingdom, and his rich rewards, and rejoices "in the hope of the glory of God." Rom. v. 1.

It is a joy of GOD'S PRODUCING IN THE HEART. Hence David prays so earnestly, "Make me to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." Psalm li. 8, 12. And Elihu asks, "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him?" Job xxxiv. 29. This eminently distinguishes it from all mere earthly joys and comforts. The most precious doctrines of the gospel may be preached in vain, or with only a temporary joy; (Luke viii. 13.) till the Holy Ghost is imparted, there is no true spiritual joy. "Joy in the Holy Ghost," is one of the peculiar blessings of "the kingdom of God," (Rom. xiv. 17.) and it is a special cause of thankfulness when any receive "the word with joy of the Holy Ghost." 1 Thess. i. 6. Christian reader, seek for that heavenly joy, which is a divine gift; a gift freely promised under the gospel, (Isaiah xii. 3.) and to be obtained by every true believer. Romans xv. 13.

Prayer for Christian Joy.

O thou only fountain of joy and gladness, say unto my soul, I am thy salvation; make me to hear of joy and gladness, and enable me so to love Christ whom I have not seen, and so believe in him, that I may always rejoice in him, for his name's sake. Amen.

4. ITS PERFECTION.

Always rejoicing in our happy duty as Christians, yet in this state of faith, and trial, and waiting; in this time of Christ's absence and our conflict and sinfulness, there are constantly mingled with it seasons of sorrow and weeping; and the Christian has more of these now than the world has. Our Lord says, "Verily, verily, I say unto

you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice." John xvi. 20.

But though it be so here, and it has to be said of the most devoted servants of the Lord, that their mingled state is "as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, (2 Cor. vi. 10.) all this is transient. How beautifully our Lord, comparing the present sorrow and future joy to the sorrow and joy at the birth of a child, adds, "Ye now, therefore, have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you!" John xvi. 22.

Unmingled joy and everlasting bliss is before the mourning Christian in the swiftly approaching day of Christ, and, in the meantime, the purest of joys to be had here below, are also his present portion.

We will notice first THE PERFECTION OF JOY ON EARTH. When David is speaking of the doubtfulness of good to be had here below, he says, "There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?" he answers the question thus: "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart." Psalm iv. 6, 7. So we find him in the 42nd and 43rd Psalm eagerly thirsting after God and the help of his countenance, and longing to go to God, his "exceeding joy." In the felt "presence" of God "is fulness of joy." Psalm xvi. 11. In communion with him, in the sweet sense of his love, and the outpouring of the whole heart before him, with the assurance that he hears us, and cares for us, and sympathizes with us, and will never leave us nor forsake us,—in such experience is the full joy on earth of the immortal soul. When the promise of Christ is fulfilled in our happy experience, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you," (John xiv. 18.) and we can say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ," and long that others may partake of it, "That their joy may be full." 1 John i. 3, 4. In these feelings is there the perfection of joy on earth; a pure, holy, loving, gracious, expansive joy, full of blessing to ourselves and to others.

But this joy not being the constant experience of the

Christian, and being continually interrupted by his corruptions and sinfulness, and the afflictions which are needful for his soul's final prosperity, we must look farther for really perfect joy, even to the day of the resurrection and the return of Christ in glory.

That joy is UNMINGLED: no troubled waters of sorrow defile it. "God himself shall be with them, and be their God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away—there shall be no night there." Rev. xxi. 3, 4; xxii. 3, 5. The thing which men are thirsting so for here, will be fully possessed by the righteous there. There will be no void of heart, in the midst of these joys, by something still needful to complete them. Every vessel of mercy will be completely full and overflowing, so that in the highest sense each one can say, "My cup runneth over."

It is the JOY OF THE LORD CHRIST. This is eminently its perfection. He is quickly coming "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." 2 Thess. i. 10. There are yet to be revealed "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Ephes. i. 18. Oh the fulness of that love, of that love of Christ, which finds its joy and glory in the happiness of others! this is the mind of Christ! And we shall partake of his joy. With what exquisite tenderness and loving-kindness does our Lord thus describe our future happiness, saying at the last day to the righteous, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Matt. xxv. 21, 23. He twice repeats it as if he loved to dwell upon it. His joy in this is called "exceeding joy." Jude 24. We may be sure that his joy is incalculably great; and to enter into that joy and share it fully—what must it be! Christian reader, do not our hearts almost sicken with desire to partake of it? Let us be faithful, then, unto death.

Once more, it is EVERLASTING JOY. Here is its crowning blessedness. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." Rev. iii. 12. All the joy and glory of that heavenly kingdom are perpetual and enduring. "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory;" (Isaiah lx. 19. "everlasting joy shall be unto them." Isaiah lxi. 7. As it is a far more exceeding, so it is an "eternal weight of glory;"—as it is an house not made with hands, so it is "eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. iv. 17; v. 1.

Imagine, then, for a moment, the ransomed of the Lord, redeemed at length from the power of the grave, clothed in the spiritual, and glorious, and incorruptible bodies of the resurrection, shining as the sun, rising from the dust of the earth, caught up by Almighty power and love, to meet Jesus, now in like manner returning from the heavenly mansions for them: imagine them going to their full reward; they "came to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they obtain joy and gladness; sorrow and sighing flee away." Oh the gatherings together from every land of all the excellent of the earth in that glorious day! Oh the unutterable joys of being ever with the Lord! This is the perfection of joy.

And what interminglings of joy will heighten and enlarge our joy then! The spiritual Father rejoices in seeing there his spiritual children, and they in seeing him. There is the joy of love in the successful result of all its labours. There is the joy of benevolence in seeing others happy for ever; there is the joy of holiness in seeing others delivered from all sin; there is the joy of gratitude in witnessing our benefactors honoured of God for their kindness to us. But especially do the scriptures set forth those to whom we have been spiritually blessed as our "joy and crown" in that day. Phil. ii. 16—18; iv. 1. 2 Cor. i. 14. 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. The people of Christ are "the jewels" of Christ. Mal. iii. 17. In short, "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many

to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Dan. xii. 3. James v. 20.

Meditation.

Why then is my soul cleaving to the dust amidst such prospects and such hopes as are thus set before me? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? let me hope in God; let me look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; and setting my affections upon them, may I have my conversation in heaven, and daily be preparing for its everlasting joys.

5. ITS INFLUENCE ON THE LIFE.

The effects of this joy (whether it be now possessed in foretaste or fully hoped for in sweet assurance) on our daily life, spirit, and conversation, are most precious and valuable.

The joy given in conversion is peculiarly important for DECISION, to enable the new convert to break through all his former sinful courses, to withstand the scoffs and jeers of all his former sinful companions, and to strengthen him to confess his Saviour before men. When the ship, having been long fastened by the ice, has to break through all the many entanglements and mountains of ice in the frozen ocean, and thus escape from all the dangers of being locked up in those unhappy regions, it needs the favouring breeze and the warming sun, and, with all advantages, perhaps only just escapes as Providence, from time to time, makes the necessary outlets for it. So it is with the soul coming out of this icy miserable world into the warmer and happier climes of the gospel. Without Christian joy it would still be fastened in by the cold bands that formerly detained it, as it were imprisoned. "The great joy" in Samaria, (Acts viii. 8.) leads on the multitudes of men and women to baptism, (v. 12.) The glad reception of the word leads on to the special holiness and devotedness of the first Christians. Acts ii. 41—47.

The joy we have in the Lord gives STRENGTH FOR DUTY. When the people were mourning and weeping on hearing the words of the law, Nehemiah, and Ezra, and the priests restrained them, leading them rather to joy and active works of love. "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Neh. viii. 10. And so their sorrow was turned into joy and love; for joy is, of all affections, specially communicative, and overflowing of itself to others.

This joy strengthens us for the blessed but more difficult duties of the Christian life. It makes all our paths cheerful and happy: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Prov. xvii. 22. "He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast." Prov. xv. 15. Very beautiful is the description in Isaiah xxxv. and lxi. of the change made by the joy of the gospel. It was the abundance of their joy that made the Philippians abound in rich liberality (2 Cor. viii. 1), and have such moderation and calm superiority to earthly things. Phil. iv. 4, 5.

Joy leads on to THANKSGIVING. Praise is the very mouth and language of joy. "Let Israel rejoice in him that made him. Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise his name in the dance, let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp." Psalm cxlviii. 2, 3. Isaiah xii. 3, 4. And as this is very honourable to the gospel, so it especially glorifies God. Psalm l. 23. God delights to honour a thankful spirit. It leads on to farther and more glorious triumphs over our enemies. How delightfully is this exhibited in the case of Jehoshaphat, when the vast armies of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir, came against him! On having the Lord's assurance of success, "he appointed singers unto the Lord, and praisers of the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise," the Lord appeared for them, and their enemies

contended with and destroyed each other. The spirit of thankfulness is nothing less than happiness and victory over our spiritual enemies.

Once more, not to enlarge too much, the prospect of future joy is needful TO ENABLE US TO ENDURE THE PRESENT CROSS. We all know how the hope of reward stimulates to exertion in every thing. Thus the labourer, the servant, the manufacturer, the man in trade, and every human being, labours for rest and recompense. So it is in the gospel. Paul counts all but loss, that he may win Christ, and, "by any means, attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Phil. iii. Moses having "respect unto the recompense of the reward, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Heb. xi. Nay, our Lord himself fixed his eye on this, and was sustained in his suffering hours by this: for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. xii. 2. Would we endure our present afflictions and trials for Christ's sake, it is absolutely necessary for us to set the future joy before us. It is no part of self-righteousness to look at a future reward; but to have this hope, is "a helmet of salvation, and an anchor of the soul."

Do not then, Christian reader, let any one persuade you that the full assurance of hope is mere presumption and rashness, and leads to pride and despising others. When founded only on Christ, our confidence "hath great recompense of reward." Heb. xi. 35. When it is "a good hope through grace," it is God's gift, and a source of unspeakable comfort and stability in the ways of Christ.

Prayer for the holy influence of joy.

Fill me, O Lord, with that joy and peace in believing, which will make me decided in thy service, and abounding in thankfulness; which will strengthen me for every holy duty, and enable me to endure present crosses in the

bright prospect of thy eternal glory, through Jesus, my Redeemer.

6. THE ATTAINMENT OF THIS JOY.

If the reader has accompanied me in spirit thus far, he will be ready to say now, it is indeed a blessed thing to have spiritual joy: but he may perhaps add, It may be the happy portion of favoured Christians, but how can I hope to gain it? To assist you in this, let us consider, how this joy may be attained.

And, first, notice that it is clear God designs in his love that NONE NEED BE WITHOUT THIS JOY. How very distinct is the first announcement of the gospel by the angel! "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The subsequent song of the heavenly host contains the same delightful truth of the universality of divine love, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." Luke ii. 10, 11—14. Equally distinct is the very last command of our faithful Redeemer, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel (the good news, the glad tidings,) to every creature." If you are in the world, if you are numbered among all creatures, then the gospel is for you. The good tidings are for you; the whole fault of not being joyful in them is not to be placed anywhere but on yourself, refusing to receive and welcome them. There is a feast of fat things for you. All things are ready. The invitation is come to you if it never came before, in these words now set before you. Oh, make not light of it, but believe the love of God to your soul!

God also COMMANDS YOU TO REJOICE. I lay before you the solemn authority of a divine command. It is not in the scriptures said merely that you are permitted and allowed to rejoice, but God actually requires you to do so. "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice." It comes from the ambassador of God, speaking in his name,

and with his authority. 2 Cor. v. 10. And this command is frequently given both in the Old and New Testament. "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people." Deut. xxxii. 43. (See Psalm xxxii, 11; xxxiii. 1; xcvii. 12; c. 1. Zech. ix. 9, 10.) There are sufficient, amply sufficient grounds to make this a reasonable command. "God (has) so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to be the Saviour of the world"—you have only to "receive the atonement" to enable you to "joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 11. And that very faith God gives to those that call on him. Rebel not then against the divine command, and be not guilty of treason against the God of heaven, in rejecting this full display of his grace and love.

FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS is the means of personally attaining this joy. Faith, like a new sense, discovers a new world, and opening the door, admits all the light of scripture truth to our minds. It is "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." It shews that all our hatred of God proceeds from ignorance and wickedness. Eph. iv. 18. And that notwithstanding this enmity, God has really so loved us as to give his Son to death, that we might be reconciled to him and made holy in his sight. Col. i. 21, 22. The rejoicing "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" comes not through sensible sight, but by believing in Jesus. 1 Peter i. 8; Rom. xv. 3. You must confide in God's word, in order that you may rejoice in God's love; and faith is quicksighted and can discern love in chastisements, and glory in suffering, and joy in sorrow, and reads things not by the light of this world, nor the feeling of outward sense, but by the heavenly light of God's word, and the experience of a spiritual mind, that discerns all things, even the deep things of God. Even in our worst sins, faith can discern truly a case that may be more suited to, and more manifest, the skill of the unequalled Physician of souls, and the perfection of his power and grace. The more sick we are of this disease of sin, the more earnestly let us call upon and trust

in our heavenly Saviour : who meets even our backslidings by the promise, " I will heal their backslidings," and by the command, " AGAIN I say rejoice."

Such is the unfailing nature of this fountain of joy, that there is no conceivable earthly condition where it may not be attained. It may ALWAYS, and in all the varied circumstances of our lives, be gained. This is plain from the command of God, as well as from the experience of his people. Amidst the destitution of all earthly things, Habakkuk says, " Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Hab. iii. 13. Amidst all the extraordinary and varied sufferings of the apostle Paul, he could say, " I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." 2 Cor. vii. 4. In the worst of this world's sorrows are some of the sweetest seasons of the Christian's peace and joy ; the brightest beams of the consolations of Christ are shining in the darkest hours of earthly sorrow. 2 Cor. i. 3—7. When we can find least light and comfort from our fellow-men, we may find most from our God. Matt. v. 11, 12.

No wonder joy is attainable ; it is THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, one of the rich fruits which he produces. If it were to be gained by our wisdom and strength, the very effort would be sorrow and despair ; but being the gift of him who gives liberally to them that ask, we have only to ask, and we shall have ; to seek, and we shall find ; to knock, and it shall be opened to us.

Meditation.

How great is the love of my God in making such provisions for the happiness of man ! Oh let me take heed of unbelief ! May I realize God's testimony as altogether true ! May I attend to his plain commands, and in the strength of those commands earnestly ask for the aid of that Holy Spirit, which alone can enable me to fulfil them !

CHAPTER XVII.

ON PRAYER.

1. Approaching God in Prayer—2. The subjects of Prayer—3. Watchfulness—4. Help provided for us—5. The reward of Prayer.

We have now seen the leading truths of the gospel, and the graces, duties, and experience of the Christian; it remains to close the whole with those means by which we most effectually obtain and enjoy divine grace, and most glorify God by returning to him thanksgiving for all his goodness; I mean prayer and praise.

As the author has fully given his thoughts on these in his Treatise on Prayer, it is the less needful for him here to enlarge. He will first suggest those things which may assist the reader to understand, love, and practise these blessed duties: and then close the work with forms of prayer adapted to the poorer classes.

1. OF APPROACHING GOD IN PRAYER.

It was one of the first and most affecting marks of our fallen condition, that the presence of God became painful to man. Our first parents heard "the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." In this description we have a sweet picture of the communion which they had previously enjoyed; apparently with the Word of God as man, anticipating his incarnation; but now being fallen, they "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." They

had been created in the image and after the likeness of God : he had been their chief joy ; he had furnished the earth with every thing to make them happy ; he manifested himself to them, wearing, as it is reasonably believed, already a human form ; and communion with him must have been their richest privilege. All this was lost by sin.

It is the great design of the gospel, by the death of Jesus,—that astonishing display of Christ's grace and holy love, shewing the greatest abhorrence of sin and yet the richest compassion to sinners,—to bring us back to real and spiritual communion with God now, and to perfected, manifested, and everlasting communion with him hereafter.

The first step towards this communion is to know and believe the real mind of God towards us. As Satan by lies first turned Adam and Eve from God, throwing doubts before them, both of his faithfulness and love (Gen. iii. 1—5), so he still in the same way keeps us from God. And all God's gracious communications with those who lived before the flood, and with those who lived after ; his call to Abraham ; the law given by Moses ; the deliverances by the judges, and the farther light given through inspired writers, kings and prophets, have all been designed to exhibit to us God's real character as still full of holy love. He hates sin most intensely, as we see in the deluge, and by Sodom and Gomorrah, and the sufferings and captivity of his own people ; yet ever welcomes the returning sinner, and fills his soul with good things.

But the gospel of our Lord Jesus is the last and the brightest display of this truth, that God really loves sinful men with righteous love, and really waits to be gracious, and really rejoices over those who come to him. " God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son—God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself—the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." These truths shew us the real mind of God towards us, with a brightness and loveliness of grace and holiness, that ought to win every

heart. They render our keeping at a distance from God wholly inexcusable. The question is no longer, Will God be reconciled to me? but, Will I be reconciled to him? The case is not, God is too terrible and too holy to be approached; but I, in my natural state, through love of sin, hate him, and prefer my lusts to my God, though he has opened the very door of access to all his glories and blessedness.

Come, then, poor sinner, and gaze upon God's grace to thee in Christ Jesus. See his paternal heart as it were yearning over thee; "Oh, that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways." Psalm lxxxi. 13. "Oh, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Isaiah xlviii. 18. Jer. xiii. 15—17. See how, when "we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. v. 10. Hear his gracious invitations. "Be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. v. 20. "Come, for all things are now ready." Luke xiv. 17. Job xxii. 21. And be sure there is not one impediment on God's part; but on the contrary he has provided every help for your immediate, happy and constant communion with him.

The way of a sinner's approach, then, is to believe God's love to us in Christ Jesus, and to go to him in that only way opened for us. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." John xiv. 6. Open thy heart then to the full testimony of God's love in the world. See his gracious promises and covenant. "I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;" and then on this ground see how you are encouraged, "having boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus—to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." Heb. x. 16—22.

Think, then, before prayer, God is really here. He loves

me truly ; he wishes to hear from me my desires. He bids me pour out my heart before him. " He is, and he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xi. 6. I have a great High Priest, perfectly holy, in whom I am accepted, and even my feeblest prayers are acceptable. I will trust, and not be afraid. God's word is true ; my hope is sure. He will receive me just as I am. There is a throne of grace, and at this throne there is mercy for me, and grace for me, in this my time of need. The invisible God is yet here, and he is my Father, and though he has ceased, in full manifestations, to dwell with men, and is only thus in heaven now, yet he hears on earth my feeblest sigh, and never hears in vain one prayer made to him in the name of Jesus Christ.

Indeed, next to knowing what God's mind is towards us, it is most important to have real faith in his promises to prayer. And of all the promises in the Bible, those made to believing prayer are the most general, and the most direct and express. God takes it as his very title that he is one that " hears prayer." Psalm lxv. 2. How full and large, how general and delightful, the plain promises ! " Ask, and it shall be given you : seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how MUCH MORE shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him." Matthew vii. 7—11. " Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." John xiv. 13. How explicit and encouraging the direction ! " Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. iv. 6. Let us believe these promises with our whole heart ; let us fulfil this direction as our richest privilege, and we shall know the Christian's secret joy of heart in approaching to God.

There are various kinds of prayer, private, public, family, social, and habitual ; but we will rather confine our attention now to prayer generally.

Prayer for the grace of Prayer.

O thou, who hast given such great and precious promises to those who call upon thy holy name, and who knowest all my unwillingness to pray, and that, through my own sin and unbelief, I cannot go to Christ except thou give me that grace; draw me, I entreat thee, by the voice of thy gospel and the teaching of thy Spirit, that it may be my delight to pray unto thee. Give me the spirit of grace and supplication, that, praying in the Holy Ghost, I may effectually obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, through Jesus Christ my Redeemer.

2. THE SUBJECTS OF PRAYER.

When we believe from the heart that the God of all power and grace, riches and glory, loves us, really hears us, really answers prayer, and does assuredly give liberally to them that ask in faith, we shall no more want subjects of prayer. Everything may be made an occasion; the Bible is an inexhaustible treasury of subjects. All its promises may be pleaded in prayer; all its threatenings may be averted from us by prayer; all its directions and precepts furnish requests for grace to observe them; all its history, by its instruction of our dangers and temptations in the wicked, and of our duty and safety in the righteous, furnishes motives for prayer. The Bible is in reality the full Book of Common Prayer for the whole church of God. The Psalms are divine forms of prayer. The prayers of the saints given throughout it, afford us beautiful patterns for our prayers.

But especially the LORD'S PRAYER contains the richest and fullest instruction and example as to what should be mentioned in prayer.

But though there are the highest subjects of prayer, and this is the first pattern as well as the most blessed form of prayer, we need not, we must not, confine our prayers to this the chief model.

We are told, "Trust in him at all times, ye people ; pour out your hearts before him ; God is a refuge for us." Psalm lxii. 8. We have an example of this pouring out of the heart, and the comfort of it, in the 102d Psalm ; and in the 142d Psalm, David says (ver. 2), "I poured out my complaint before him, I shewed before him my trouble." This is a most instructive description of the real nature of prayer. It is not a form of words, but it is the emptying of the inward feelings into the bosom of God ; the desire of the heart expressed to the most mighty and most gracious of friends.

Now here our sins, our wants, and our fellow-men, and our mercies, may be viewed as forming the leading subjects of our prayers.

Our sins, in any light in which they affect our conscience, and burden our spirit, should be confessed to God, freely and ingenuously with all their aggravations. Sins in spirit, against each of the ten commandments ; sins against the law of love to God and of love to man ; sins against the light of the gospel, and the checks of conscience, and against solemn resolutions, aggravated by their multitude and our privileges, and the fearful threatenings and gracious promises of God. Sins which may be traced up to a corrupt nature as their true source and deepest degradation. Psalm li. 5.

Our wants furnish another large reason for prayer every day of our lives. If we really are, as we acknowledge, sinners, how much we need pardon, and deliverance from the guilt and the power of sin ! How we need succour against temptation from our varied enemies, and to escape that punishment which sin merits ! If we are needy and helpless, as we really are, how much we require divine aid to sanctify us both inwardly and outwardly ; that our thoughts and affections, our words and actions, may be pure, and holy, and heavenly ; that we may trust in the grace of God, receive the Spirit of God, and obey the will of God, believe in his Son, walk after his Spirit, and rejoice in his love ! What an extended ground for prayer also is

opened by our temporal wants ; the things needful to provide for and protect, nourish and sustain, and comfort us, day by day.

Our fellow-men, again, have to be prayed for. The church of God spread over the world should have our first thoughts, that grace may be with all them that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, and he may speedily come in his power and glory, establishing his kingdom over the earth. Then Christian nations should be remembered, that God may purify them from their corruptions, and destroy Antichrist, and revive his ancient churches. The Jews ought also to have a special place in our prayers, according to the mind of Christ. Isaiah lxii. The infidel nations, Pagan and Mahomedan, should be remembered, that God would give the heathen to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Our own country has also a strong claim on our prayers : that it may be preserved from wicked men, and made a blessing to the earth. Then come the interesting circles of *home*, parents, brothers, sisters, children, relatives, servants, friends, and of *neighbourhood ;* those dwelling about us, with whom we have social intercourse ; and lastly, the poor and afflicted also, and all in sorrow and need. The very hints of these things may shew the extent of prayer.

Our mercies are a still more copious occasion of communion with God. How many, how daily, how great they are, no tongue can tell ! Look at those of a *temporal* character, in your being, birth, nature, education, and preservation ; in the possession of limbs, faculties, sense, health, property. Look at those of a *national* character. What a privileged country is ours : what freedom, what religious advantages, what fulness of scriptures, what quietness and safety ! Look at our *scriptural* mercies, the gift of Christ, the promise of the Spirit, our churches, the means of grace, baptism, the Lord's Supper ; then view your election, your redemption, vocation, justification, adoption, and sanctification ; view the return, kingdom, and glory of Christ, and his making you an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven ;

look again at more particular mercies to you, in special preservation from danger, recovery from sickness of body or backsliding of soul. Then think of the innumerable multitude of these mercies. How wonderful the Giver, and how unworthy the receiver ! think of his forbearance and his grace to such a sinner. Then look also at his mercies to your fellow-men, in the varied connections we have noticed. And surely you will close the review as David does, " Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever." Psalm cvii. 43 ; cxlv. 21.

Prayer for enlargement of mind in the things of God.

O my heavenly Father, how dark and ignorant I am, that I should be at a loss what to say in prayer to thee, with such great and weighty matters to bring before thee. Lord, have mercy upon me, and open my eyes to see the wondrous things of thy word, and enlarge my heart to desire those great blessings which thou hast promised. Shew me my sinfulness, that I may freely and fully confess sin ; shew me thy riches, that I may petition for grace : give me love to my fellow-men, that I may abound in intercession for others ; and shed abroad thy love in my heart, that I may always and in every thing give thanks unto thee. Thus enlarge my heart to run in the way of thy commandments, for Christ's sake. Amen.

3. WATCHFULNESS.

The difficulties of prayer, from the remaining evils, even in the converted man's heart, are very great. That inward conflict of which we have spoken, manifests itself especially in all our efforts to pray. " The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." To persevere in steady, daily, fervent, full prayer, is the very highest attainment of a Christian, and his full blessedness on earth.

WATCHFULNESS, so often connected with prayer (Luke xxi. 36. Col. iv. 2. 1 Peter iv. 7. Eph. vi. 18), is especially necessary for continuance in prayer. Watchfulness is that state of mind which guards against expected dangers, shakes off sinful security, takes heed lest sin, Satan, or the world should deceive, overcome, or hurt us, and looks out for the promises and effectual help assured to us in the word of God. Watchfulness is self-recollectedness of our danger and our duties, our means of safety and our hopes, so that the soul is ready for duty, as occasions call for it.

By watchfulness we come to learn the real HINDRANCES to prayer, which are many and serious. The love of sin damps all our confidence in God. Psalm lxvi. 18. It is a gross inconsistency to attempt to please God by prayer, when we are gratifying our lusts, which God has forbidden ; making our religion a mere cover for treason and rebellion against God. What communion can there be with him in such vain repetitions ! Matt. vi. 7. Watch then against this sincerity. The same kind of hindrance is seen in a disregard of the word of God. If we refuse to hear the voice of our best and only really effective friend ; our God and our Father, what can prayer to him be but self-righteous ostentation, instead of real desire to do his will. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Prov. xxviii. 19 Let us not neglect to pray, however wicked we may have been or now are ; but let us really seek grace to deliver us from our wickedness. Watch then, against such hypocrisy, as mere formal prayer. Worldliness of spirit is another mighty impediment. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life," if you would "watch and pray always." Luke xxi. 34—36. Indisposition to prayer is our natural state, and not to be indulged but contended with ; self-righteous satisfaction, on the other side, is equally injurious to the true spirit of prayer. Luke xviii. 9—14. Seeking the glory that comes from man

(Matt. vi. 5), makes prayer offensive to God, as does any indulged sin. Isaiah i. 10—16. Watchfulness overcomes these hindrances.

By watchfulness we find out that many EXCUSES, which at first seemed sufficient, arise from the mere love of sin and unbelief—such as "it is needless to pray," "I cannot pray," "I am too busy," "I find no benefit from it," "I am too wicked; it is legal, it is formal." Oh, wretched reasons; which none would urge, if a superior were to promise great benefits which they desired, on their applying for them, and which therefore only leave us more guilty and justly exposed to more wrath, for refusing to accept God's invitations and gifts. Watchfulness guards against and meets these excuses.

There are some more and insinuating and ensnaring DIFFICULTIES. We rise up late, and lose the time we had at our own disposal for prayer; we are interested in our employments, and defer prayer at night, till we are wearied and too sleepy to give earnestness of mind to prayer. We are thrown into new circumstances, and have not the usual season of prayer. Watchfulness prepares us not to yield to such temptations.

Watchfulness has again full employment IN THE ACTS OF PRAYING. To seize favourable opportunities beyond our ordinary seasons; a private walk or journey; a time of special danger and difficulty; an important duty before us, are such seasons. Then in prayer itself. Oh, the fearful hindrances! I have heard of a farmer, only just beginning to think of religion, who, in reading a form of family prayer, would stop in the middle, and ask his men some questions about the farm, and then go on; and then again, before he had finished, recollecting some fresh worldly concern, would ask other questions; plainly manifesting where his heart was while he prayed. Do you see the folly and sinfulness of such interruptions? Look within. He, alas, did openly what our hearts are really doing in almost every prayer we make. O how great our need of a firm

watchfulness! "stirring up ourselves," in the language of scripture, to take hold of God. Isaiah lxiv. 7.

Then we need to watch for HELPS TO PRAYER. As we shall see, those helps are abundantly provided; but it is by watchfulness we apply for them and obtain them.

The same watchfulness will regard THE ANSWERS OF PRAYER. David says, "I will hear what the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints." Psalm lxxxv. 8. And Habakkuk determines, "I will stand upon my watch, and get me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me." Hab. ii. 1. Many a profitable lesson, as well as much encouragement to prayer, is gained by such watchfulness. "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my supplications, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." Psalm cxvi. 1, 2. 1 John v. 14, 15.

Prayer for Watchfulness.

O my blessed Redeemer, how often hast thou charged me to watch! How clearly hast thou said, What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch! And how opposed is my self-indulgent, heavy and worldly mind to this spirit! How great my outside formality and my inward sloth and carelessness! Come then with thine own Spirit, and succour me, that I may shake off the heaviness of a corrupt nature, and follow thee fully in all things, for thy name's sake. Amen.

4. HELP PROVIDED FOR US.

It is most true, that we are really helpless as to prayer in ourselves. Our ignorance is deep, "we know not what to pray for as we ought." Our averseness is in ourselves insurmountable. "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." John vi. 44. Our very thoughts are not at our command; we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." 2 Cor. iii. 5. In short, without Christ "we can do nothing."

There is a state of self-sufficiency that repels all this, and says, "It is not true. I can do what I please." There is a state of earthliness and love of sin, which says, "Oh, it is quite true, and therefore I need not do anything. I must leave all to God, who will do all without me."

But in both cases the mind is in willing captivity to sin and Satan ; blinded by pride, self-conceit, and the love of sin. The Bible has an answer for both. By exhibiting the death of Jesus for our sins, it condemns all sin. When the gospel is believed, it humbles and removes our pride and self-wisdom, and it shews how hateful all sin is in itself, and rouses us to look to Christ, who has life for us.

There is help "laid on one that is mighty," for us. Jesus is "mighty to save" us ; and the helps which he has provided are all-sufficient.

He has given us many OUTWARD helps. His word, as we have seen, is the Common Prayer Book of the church ; containing motives, and helps, and forms, and full matter for constant prayer. He has given us a perfect form of prayer. Luke xi. 2—4. From our early years most of us have been taught daily to pray to God in secret. All his varying providences, trials, and mercies, difficulties and temptations, dangers and anxieties, sorrows and joys, are so many outward calls to prayer, "Is any among you afflicted ? let him pray. Is any merry ? let him sing psalms." James v. 13. Were we in a right state, every step in providence would be an occasion of prayer and of praise, and we should be walking with God all the day long.

The Psalms may be viewed as the very office of prayers, which our Redeemer used. How often he quotes them ! Matthew xxi. 16, 42 ; xxii. 44 ; John x. 34 ; xiii. 18 ; xv. 25. Two of his last prayers on the cross were in the words of the Psalms. Matt. xxvii. 46. Luke xxiii. 46. To a very large extent they may profitably be viewed as the prayers and praises of our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as predictions concerning him, (Luke xxiv. 44.) and thus be used by us and offered up in his name.

It may assist the reader in his prayers to point out some scriptural prayers from THE PSALMS, which he may use for his assistance as he needs.

Confession of sin, xxxviii. li. lxxiii.

Prayers for pardon and help, vi. xxv. xxxv. cxxx. cxliii.

Prayers for grace to keep God's law. Psalm cxix.

Prayers in affliction, xliii. xliv. lx. lxxiv. lxxix. lxxx. xciv. cxxxvii.

Intercession for the coming of Christ, and his kingdom, xx. xlv. lxxii. cxxxii.

Intercession for Jerusalem, cxxii.

Intercession for the Gentiles, lxvii.

Thanksgivings, xxx. xxxiv. ciii. cxviii.

Praise and adoration, xciii. xcvi. c. cvii. cxv.

SELF-EXAMINATION may also furnish a material help to prayer. At the close of the day, to recal the varied scenes of morning, afternoon, and evening, and the state of our minds in each ; what our actions were, and what words passed from us, and what our leading desires were, and to compare all with the law of supreme love to God and hearty love to all men, will tend much to shew us what has to be confessed before God in prayer, and what grace has to be requested. At the commencement of the day, to consider through what scenes we shall have to pass, and what have been our dangers and failures in similar scenes, will furnish us in the morning with helps for our petitions from God. The 119th Psalm, the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Sermon on the Mount, (Matt. v. vi. vii.) and the first epistle of St. John, will furnish you with the great tests of Christian character.

The chief point of self-examination is indeed to know whether we be "in the faith," and whether "Christ Jesus be in us." 2 Cor. xiii. 5. And this is to be seen in all the fruits of faith, love, purity, victory over the world, righteousness, joy, peace.

And still let us remember, that to gain real good we must look away from ourselves and from every thing else, and look only unto Jesus. The very ends to be desired in

self-examination, even humility, contrition, repentance, love, holiness, peace and joy, are attained by looking unto Jesus.

But prayer is an inward and spiritual work, and the grand helps to prayer are INWARD, and to be drawn from the gracious, bountiful, holy and compassionate mind of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This is the one way in which both Jew and Gentile can with confidence and joy come to God ; "through Christ we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." As we realize this we rise through forms, and even far above forms, to sweet and perfect communion with God.

GOD, SEEN AS OUR FATHER, is the great motive to prayer. This made the prodigal return. Luke xv. This our Lord puts in the front of his prayer. And blessed be his name, we have only to read and believe his word to know that when we truly go to him he will be a Father to us (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) that when we believe in Jesus, we have the right and privilege of being his sons ; (John i. 12.) that when we are led by the Spirit of God we are the sons of God. Rom. viii. 14. Thus let us gain assurance from his word, of his fatherly heart to us, and know that the very end of redemption was that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gal. iv. 5. Thus, believing, we shall receive "the Spirit of adoption, and cry Abba, Father ;" and go to him as our dear children come to us, with feelings of confidence and not of terror, with feelings of reverence and not of undue familiarity ; with feelings of love and joy ; and not of unwillingness and reluctance.

JESUS OUR MEDIATOR, is the next great inward help of prayer. Let us realize the truth, so precious and unspeakably important to such sinful creatures ; that we have "a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens ;" that he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities ; that he appears there in the presence of God for us ; that he bears the iniquity of our holy things ; that our prayers are offered by him with much incense of his own merit, and that he ever lives to make intercession for us ; and

thus, what a door of access is opened to us, notwithstanding all our sinfulness. The scriptures teach us, with a strength and confidence it would have been otherwise presumption to have used: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—let us draw near with a true heart." Heb. x. 19—22. Even to appear in the outer court would be a privilege, but for such as we to come into THE HOLIEST! O how efficacious and mighty is the blood of our Redeemer!

The HOLY GHOST is also our inward intercessor on earth, as Jesus is our Intercessor above. He brings all God's love into personal feeling, experience, and enjoyment. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered." Rom. viii. 26. This is "that spirit of grace and of supplication" which God has so graciously promised to pour out, (Zech. xii. 10.) and that "praying in the Holy Ghost, (Jude 20.) which makes prayer really "fervent and effectual." James v. 16. Gain this, and you gain almighty strength to carry you over all your weakness and deadness, your wanderings and distractions, your mere formality and lip-service.

See what a provision of love God has made for your living in prayer, and attaining the full blessedness connected with the gracious command, "Pray without ceasing!"

Thanksgiving for God's gracious assistance in Prayer.

Almighty and most merciful Father, thou hast done everything to help me to call upon thy name. What more couldest thou have done for thy vineyard! I praise thee first for thine own love; I praise thee for the gift of thy Son; I praise thee for the promise of thy Spirit; I praise thee for the word of thy grace; I praise thee for all thy gracious providences. Oh, give me a heart to listen to all thy often repeated calls, and to walk with thee all the day long, through Jesus, my Redeemer.

5. THE REWARD OF PRAYER.

"God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," and what tongue can tell the fulness of this reward? Search the scriptures, and see for yourselves how prayer is rewarded: what gracious answers in every age it has obtained; what incalculable blessings have been given to the praying soul!

We can here only slightly touch on a few of those good things which are given to prayer.

Really loving us, and having appointed prayer as the means of his bestowing upon us what is good for us, GOD TRULY ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS AS IS BEST FOR US. He always, in answer to the desire of the heart, expressed in prayer to him, gives what will best meet that desire for our highest good. Let us remember our own blindness and our ignorance of what is for our real good. If my child comes to me for that which would injure him if granted immediately, and I know it would do so, my love to the child requires me to delay the gift, and to meet his real wants by providing for his best happiness in a deeper and fuller way than my child ever thinks of. So, infinitely more our heavenly Father, knowing our real necessities, answers our real wishes to be made happy in what we request of him. Have this true faith in every prayer. How beautifully the apostle John states it, "This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything, according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he heareth us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." 1 John v. 14, 15. Oh inexhaustible treasury of riches, every petition for our good answered in the best way by infinite wisdom and love! What more or greater reward of prayer than this sweet assurance which our God has given to us! How well St. James charges each in want. "Let him ask of God, that giveth to all men (do notice that full word ALL) liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James i. 5.

A further reward is SALVATION. Yes, nothing less than salvation is connected with true and persevering prayer. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. x. 13. And how large and full is that one gracious reward, salvation! what present blessings in pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, joy and heavenly-mindedness! What future blessings, in goodness and mercy following us all our days, and in a happy death! What eternal blessings on reaching the paradise, where the spirits of the just are; in the resurrection to glory at our Lord's return; in reigning with him in his kingdom! Only call on the Lord, and all these things are your's.

The reward of prayer in trouble is very great; nothing less than REAL DELIVERANCE FROM TROUBLE; not indeed in all cases, as St. Paul's thorn in the flesh may teach us, the actual REMOVAL of the affliction itself; but the far higher blessing of glorying in the trouble, from its blessed effects, and of taking pleasure in it that the power of Christ may rest upon us. But in very many cases, let the experienced Christian judge, the trouble itself through prayer will be wholly removed, and only furnish a rich occasion of praise and thanksgiving to our God. Psalm xlvi. 1; l. 15. Isaiah xxvi. 16. 1 Kings xxi. 19. 1 John i. 9. Let every troubled soul perseveringly try this method. God is faithful and will not disappoint them.

PEACE OF GOD WITHIN is the present fruit of prayer. The apostle Paul immediately connects the direction "in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God," with the promise, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." Phil. iv. 6, 7. The apostle immediately connects "casting all your care upon him," with the sweet assurance, "for he careth for you." 1 Peter v. 7. And when is our spirit calm and heavenly, when are our hopes of glory brightened, when is all within at peace, but after communing with our God in prayer?

USEFULNESS TO OTHERS is a further reward of prayer.

And this is a seed of all others most productive of future glory. Dan. xii. 3. Phil. ii. 16. 1 Thess. ii. 19. Who will be found to be most really useful to the souls of others? Will it not be the men of most intercessory prayer? See Daniel, chapter ix. Search through David's Psalms, or Paul's Epistles, and see what men of prayer they were. They were men also of great activity and energy, but it had all its secret vigour and strength and effect in their being eminently men of prayer. While great active exertion without prayer may be so blighted and wither as to come to very little real usefulness, an effort springing from and carried on by prayer has Omnipotence on its side.

Once more, it is THE PREPARATION FOR SEEING GOD HEREAFTER, and dwelling in his presence for ever. We see him now by faith; we go to him now by believing prayer; and this makes us more and more to delight in him and to be like him, and gains for us more and more of that purity of heart to which the promise is made, "they shall see God;" as well as that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii. Access then, to God's presence on earth, is the way of access to God's presence in glory, "when we shall see him as he is."

Prayer for fervency in Prayer.

O thou gracious Father, who hath joined so many and such great benefits to prayer, may I never lose them by slightly attending, or carelessly going through such an important work. Give me the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man which availeth much, that I may be blessed in prayer, according to thy gracious purposes and promises, for Jesus Christ's sake.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON PRAISE.

1. The privilege of praise—2. Helps given to enjoy it—3. Its everlasting blessedness.

1. THE PRIVILEGE OF PRAISE.

"In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." 1 Thess. v. 10. Such is the gracious command of our heavenly Father. And it is a command full of true wisdom as well as of vast love. Mysterious as it may seem, there is ample reason why we should in every thing give thanks; for as there is nothing that can happen to a Christian which will not furnish to him some ground of praise; so the command to praise in every thing allows us, yes, requires us to look at the bright side of every thing, and to live in the constant sunshine of divine love. Oh, happy command; let us seek ever to realise the full joy which it is designed to give. We need not fear that the command does not contain all that it appears to express, for it is one repeated again and again. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus." Ephes. v. 26. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him." Col. iii. 17. See also Heb. xiii. 15.

The privilege, observe, is ever connected with Christ Jesus; for it is only through him that every thing becomes a real blessing to us sinners. Without him all is darkness

and misery, gloom and death ; with him all is light and life, joy and happiness. When we belong to Christ, all things belong to us. Thus the apostle states it, "All things are yours ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. iii. 21—23.

Believing then in the Lord Jesus, and loving him, all things are working for my good ; and there is not a trial or a benefit, a trouble or a joy, a loss or a gain, a labour or a rest from labour, but I may see the love of God to my soul in it, and truly praise him for all. He "performeth all things for me ;" all my times are in his hands : all is ordained and directed and comes and goes according to the counsels of his wisdom and love ; the fiery trial is to purify ; the loss of earthly things is to wean me from this world and endear to me heavenly things ; the worst things are a preparation for the best.

A spirit of praise is a SPIRIT OF HAPPINESS. Never are we more joyful than in giving thanks from the heart to our God. Hence we find joy and praise so frequently combined together : for praise is the natural overflow of joy, and the very voice of inward happiness. Psalm xxxi. 1. Psalm cxlvii. 1. It is the outburst of a full heart that cannot be silent. In this fulness of feeling how many of David's Psalms of Praise begin : as if he could no longer contain the fulness of his joy and gratitude. And indeed, when we consider what great things the Lord has done for us, and what compassion he has had upon us, visiting us in our low estate, and raising us from such a scene of darkness and degradation as that in which we were by nature lying, calling "us out of darkness into his marvellous light," on purpose "to shew forth his praises," let these things be seen and felt, and the blessings bestowed and the inward feelings excited, must have vent in the privilege of praise ; "for out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh."

It is the privilege of praise to GLORIFY GOD. It is the

very posture of spirit in which every creature of God ought to be, honouring his wisdom, his righteousness, his holy will, and his loving-kindness. "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me." Psalm l. 23. What attribute of our God does not praise glorify? It glorifies his power as the maker and continuer of all good; it glorifies his wisdom in the varied kinds of good; it glorifies his bounty in the unceasing flow of this good; it glorifies his righteousness, that through Jesus this good can, by his sufferings, be given us; it glorifies the riches of his grace and mercy, in good coming to the unworthy. And what higher privilege can there be for us, than thus before all creation to testify his love; to be the priests of the earth and all that is therein, offering intelligent praise to the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort? Amidst all the murmuring and disputing, complaining and bitterness of spirit in the world, what a privilege God confers upon that man who glorifies him by giving him thanks in every thing: and who speaks thus, again and again, with a constant voice, the delightful truth, GOD IS LOVE—GOD IS LOVE, IN EVERY THING.

Prayer for a thankful spirit.

Who can open, O blessed Saviour, my closed affections? who can enlarge my narrow heart but thyself? What can change my selfish spirit into love and gratitude, but thy love to me? Reveal thyself, then, more and more, with all the Father's love and all the Spirit's grace, that my heart being filled with the sense of divine love, my soul may constantly abound in grateful thanksgivings, and my life shew forth thy praise, for thy name's sake.

2. HELP GIVEN TO ENJOY PRAISE.

May our eyes be opened to see the abundant help provided for us in the gospel; that if we have in every thing to give thanks, every thing rightly viewed is really a help to thanksgiving.

To nothing are we more called by the daily providence

of God than to praise. "Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice or to sing." Psalm lxv. 8. Every fresh morning's light, and every evening's rest ; every breath of air and every ray of light ; every article of clothing and every morsel of food ; every limb and every sense ; every faculty of mind, will, understanding, memory, and affection ; these are continually presenting calls on us to praise God and to magnify his name. "All his works in all places of his dominion" reverberate the sound, "Praise ye the Lord." All our health and comforts, our family and relatives, our servants or our masters, our friends, our social circle, our country and its peace and freedom, what help here is to praise !

Yes ! but are there not sorrows and troubles mingled with these things ? There are, and if, "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," you can go farther still and say, "we glory in tribulation also." Oh ! many a Christian has thanked God with tears of joy for his sorrowing hours, and testified from the heart, "in very faithfulness thou hast afflicted me."

But OUR SINS ! they are our deepest evils ; in themselves unmingled evil, and to be abhorred with intense hatred. Yet the Christian will not forget that they have been overcome with good, and have given occasion for the richest display of loving-kindness. When he looks at his sins, his notes of praise will be heightened to an infinitely greater fulness than could otherwise have been attained. This made Paul so magnify the grace of God given to him. This makes the believer exclaim—Why have I been spared ? Why am I not consumed ? It is all of the Lord's mercies !

Then how these mercies, in all the richness and fulness of gospel grace, furnish helps for thanksgiving ! Where shall we begin ? Where shall we end ? His loving-kindness is from everlasting to everlasting. What an unspeakable gift ; "not to spare his own Son, but to deliver him up for us all !" Surely no words can adequately describe,

no mind can adequately conceive, the amazing extent of God's love to man, in the gift of gifts, the gift of his Son.

And then with him what blessings come ! The gift of the Holy Spirit in us; what enlarged love is the love of the Spirit ! The varied spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus : the varied means of grace, and the hope of glory to follow. It is a boundless, ceaseless, everlasting tide of goodness, utterly inexhaustible through eternity.

And yet farther, to give us the full knowledge of the things which are freely given to us of God, there are outward and inward spiritual helps for our praise and thanksgiving.

There is first THE WORD OF GOD, which is a key to every thing, unlocking its real meaning and setting it forth in its true light, as manifesting God's wise and holy love to man. There is a growing light of love, more and more dispelling the darkness of sin, however it may advance in the multiplication of human beings and their increased wickedness, overcoming the stubbornness of evil, and at length issuing in the return of Christ to our earth made new, and in his dwelling here for ever. Rev. xxi. 1—4.

The Bible is full of helps to thanksgiving. One cannot read it seriously without having a spirit of thankfulness called forth by the various truths and facts which it mentions. But especially the example of holy men, and their thanksgivings and hymns of praise, should stir us up as effectual helps to praise. The whole book of Psalms, written by the inspired man after God's own heart, is full of praises, and how oft repeated the wish, " Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." Psalm cvii. Who can in a right mind read such Psalms as the ciii. civ. cxlv. and the whole remaining Psalms to the close, without having grateful feelings called forth ? It is a real help to praising God to practise this duty in your families. Use and practice make praise

easy. Oh, did but all families even that worship God morning and evening, try more to introduce praise as well as prayer, the singing of Psalms as well as the reading of the scriptures, how much would the volume of holy praise daily ascending to our God be enlarged through our country! The Lord's day seems especially to call for psalms and hymns of praise as the most suitable and happy improvement of its sacred hours.

Prayer to God is however needful for an enlarged heart in praise. So David found it: he prays, "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." Psalm li. 15. And so we, wearied and burdened with temptation and sin and the inward conflict, shall find we must pray to be able to praise, as well as praise to be able to pray.

The inward effectual help is the Holy Spirit, who, in accomplishing all his gracious work, fulfils the promise which our Lord made, "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you." And in the view of this aid, St. Paul tells us to abound in praise: "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always." Ephes. v. 18—20.

Prayer for an enlarged view of God's mercies.

Lord God of my salvation, pity my most sinful blindness and hard-heartedness, that surrounded as I am with thy goodness, I have so often refused to see and acknowledge thy loving-kindness. Shed abroad, I entreat thee, thy love in my heart, by thine own Spirit; teach me the things thou hast freely given, enlighten the eyes of my understanding that I may know what is the hope of thy calling, and enlarge my confidence of heart in thee, that I may see love in all thy dealings with me, through Jesus, my Redeemer.

3. its everlasting blessedness.

It may well heighten our view of the excellence of praise

to consider that it is the chief joy and occupation of the heavenly and glorified hosts above. Whenever the doors of the heavenly kingdom are as it were open to us, and a sight is given to us, of the employment of the blessed inhabitants of those glorious mansions, we find that this is their work. Thus, Isaiah, when he saw the glory of the Lord, heard the songs of Seraphim, "and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." Thus, John, when the door was opened in heaven, heard the new song of the four living creatures and the four-and-twenty elders, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours.—"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." He heard also the angelic song from the angels round about the throne, the number of whom was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands; and they too were occupied in the same way; they were "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Rev. v. 9—12. So the great multitude which no man can number, gathered out of the great tribulation, are described as "standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and crying with a loud voice, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Rev. vii.

The chief command that we read of as given to the heavenly hosts, is praise. "A voice came out of the throne saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." And with what joyful alacrity that command (inviting to the fullest privilege and the highest joy) is obeyed, may be seen in what follows: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty

thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour unto him." Rev. xix. 5, 6.

This is the highest glory of man to see and know God, and praise him unceasingly for all his excellent greatness. If searching into the works of God, or into the creatures of God, and their doings, and a deep knowledge of these things be thought honourable, how excellent must it be rightly to know the Creator and rightly to celebrate his praises !

The very end of all creation is to glorify God, and of intelligent creation to glorify him, and enjoy him for ever. " O praise him therefore for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness." Psalm cl. 2.

It is the completion of all heavenly graces : faith is realized in sight, hope becomes enjoyment, love has full fruition of the beloved object, when in his presence we come to praise him for ever. There is unceasing gratitude, there is rapturous communion, there is fulness of joy, and that for evermore. " The ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads."

It is worthy of remark, that we only find Hallelujah in the New Testament, at the close, (Rev. xix.) when, as it is believed, the Jews will have been brought in. The last and the perpetual song of the church united and triumphant, is when Jew and Gentile make the heavenly mansions resound with the mighty thunderings of their Hallelujahs. May you and I, Christian reader, partake of them.

Meditation.

When shall it ever be ? When shall this time of full blessedness and glory really arrive ! Now I am in the land of darkness and the shadow of death ; afar off from God, my exceeding joy. When shall this body of death be laid aside, and the seeing through the mirror and in the figure, be exchanged for seeing face to face, and knowing in part,

for knowing as I am known, and the cold faltering Hallelujahs of earth, be turned into the fervent and rapturous Hallelujahs of heaven, and the conflict be changed for the victory ; and the tears of sorrow for the songs of joy : and the struggles with corruption and flesh and blood, terminate in the spiritual and glorified body, and the perfect likeness to my Saviour's image ! Lord ! help me more and more to look at the joy set before me, and in the blessed hope of that joy, like my Saviour, to take up my cross daily, and follow him.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CREED, TEN COMMANDMENTS, AND LORD'S PRAYER.

1. Meditations on the Apostles' Creed—2. Meditations on the Ten Commandments—3. The Lord's Prayer, with Practical Remarks.

1. MEDITATIONS ON THE APOSTLES' CREED.

Mark ix. 23. "Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

THE CREED.

I. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. II. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. III. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. IV. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried : he descended into hell. V. The third day he rose again from the dead. VI. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. VII. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. VIII. I believe in the Holy Ghost. IX. The holy Catholic church, the communion of saints. X. The forgiveness of sins. XI. The resurrection of the body. XII. And the life everlasting. Amen.

Creed is derived from a Latin word, meaning belief. The Apostles' Creed has its name from its containing the doctrine of the apostles, rather than because it was formed by

them. There is not at least sufficient evidence of its being composed by them, to be satisfactory ; though there is much reason to think that Christians had a general confession of faith, very similar to this, under apostolic sanction. As our Lord required baptism to be administered "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ;" so the Ethiopian Eunuch, before his baptism, confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ;" and hence before baptism, there was generally a confession of faith from the baptized. Several of the articles of this creed are stated together by St. Paul. 1 Cor. xv. 1—4, &c.

There were several similar early creeds somewhat varying from this, as we see in early Christian writings ; but about the fourth century, what we call the Apostles' Creed, became generally adopted in the Christian church, as a most scriptural and comprehensive summary of the great facts of Christianity, on which all its doctrines are founded, and by which the soul may be led to the most profitable meditations.

It is sometimes wrongly used by the poor as if it were a daily *prayer*. But as a daily help to *meditation*, the great reformer Luther, and many others, have used it, and found excellent assistance through it, for the contemplation of all the great mysteries of the gospel.

I BELIEVE.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. xi. Faith is not therefore needed to discern and apprehend what is seen or felt by the outward senses, though all outward things may help us to know and discover the invisible God. Nor is it anything that a superior natural understanding may discover in science that is the proper exercise of faith.

Faith has to do with what God designs us to learn as the real and holy lesson of all creation and all Providence, that "God is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him ;" that he is kind to the evil and to the good, as well

as righteous in all his doings, designing by this goodness to lead them to seek after him. And more especially, faith regards all that God has said in his word as altogether true. The Bible itself is manifested to the believer as really his word by its own holy light and purifying and comforting power, as well as by the way in which it was revealed and confirmed, and has been handed down to us, as the word of the living God.

O Lord, give me this faith. Thy word is the sure ground of my belief, and I am in my heart fully persuaded on the testimony of that word of the things contained in this Creed which I now confess with my mouth. May my faith ever be such as to make them a reality in my mind and heart; and a constant spring of holy and heavenly thoughts, affections, and actions, through my whole life.

I BELIEVE IN GOD—

That there is one living and true God, who is a Spirit, ever righteous and gracious, the source and beginner of all other beings, and on whom they all depend; so that I am not left desolate in the world without an infinitely wise, holy, mighty, ever present, and most merciful Being, who governs, provides for, and orders everything for good to them that trust in him and love him. O Lord, ever help me to have child-like confidence in thee, and to love, delight in, and magnify thee, as my own God and portion, for ever.

THE FATHER.

I believe God to be not only the Father of all things by creation, but also the Father of his only-begotten Son from eternity, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is his Son in such a peculiar sense as to be equal with God. John i. 18; v. 18.

Through Jesus Christ I also believe God to be my Father, not only as creating me, but also as begetting me anew by his own Spirit, and adopting me into his family, making me a partaker of the divine nature, and giving me the pri-

vilege to be his son, and being full of fatherly love and pity to me. Glory for ever be to this Father for his love to me and all creation, and especially for that surpassing love by which he calls me his son.

ALMIGHTY.

He is able to do everything according to his own good and holy will, so that nothing is impossible with God. He has all power to turn away evil and to give good. "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." O Lord, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders," weak in myself, I would lean on thy Almighty arm; may I love thee, trust in thee, and rejoice in thee, my all-sufficient Sun and Shield, now and evermore.

MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

The heavens above are thy work, O my God; whether I regard the clouds or the air, where "the fowls fly in the midst of heaven;" or the sun, moon, and stars of the higher heavens; or the highest and third heavens, where Cherubim and Seraphim and all the heavenly host magnify thy name: and thy Son is seated at thy right hand, on thine own throne, and there reigns with thee—all were made by thee. How glorious then art thou! Who can be against us, if God is for us? Who can help us, if God be against us? Thou, even thou, art Lord alone, "thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, and thou preservest them all." Neh. ix. 6. Of thee, through thee, and to thee, "are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. xi. 36. All that thou hast made is good, yes, altogether good. O may I have perfect confidence in thy power and wisdom, and righteousness, and loving-kindness. May I know that the very hairs of my head are numbered, and being careful for nothing, may I, through

Jesus Christ, constantly rest in God, as my Lord and my God, for ever.

AND IN JESUS CHRIST.

How great and good is the name of JESUS! Jehovah, my Saviour. What word can be more full of holy joy and gladness! What a sweet command is that which he has given ; "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Oh, I do believe in thee, Jesus, thou Son of God. I was dead, and thou hast given me life ; I was lost and thou didst find me. I was an enemy of God, and thou hast reconciled me. I am sinful, and thou art my advocate. Oh, no tongue can tell my obligations to thee!

And in Christ, one anointed in holy offices for my good, I have farther blessings. I have a Prophet to teach and instruct me in the things of God. I have a High Priest to intercede for me, and obtain every good. I have a King to rule over all things for the good of his church.

O my God, give me a simple trust in all that the Lord Jesus Christ is, and in all that he has done for my salvation! May it be my great aim to "win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith ;" being fully persuaded that thou hast appointed him to be "the Saviour of the world," and that he is both able and willing and gracious to be my Saviour. Draw me to him, and give me a joyful heart to welcome and receive him.

HIS ONLY SON.

How precious and delightful is the Godhead of Jesus, and the glorious truth that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead," bodily. Col. ii. 9. He had "glory with the Father, before the world was." John xvii. 5. "By him God made the worlds." He is "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person." Heb. i. 2, 3. As man, created by the power of the Holy Ghost, he was called "Son of God ;" but besides this, he is his only Son.

"God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son," the only one by nature, equal with him, (Phil. ii. 5—9.) "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Micah v. 3. And being God's ONLY Son, he delights that we should share his blessings and glories; "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." All praise, and love and glory be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the only and eternally begotten Son of God.

OUR LORD.

What a glory to have such a Lord and Master, and to be in his service, which is perfect freedom! Well may I know he is my Lord, and the Lord of all men, seeing "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." He has bought us with his blood; and I am enlisted by baptism into his service, and have confirmed my engagements at his table in the Lord's Supper. He tells me, "Ye say well when ye call me Lord." John xiii. 13. Oh, may I have grace given me to follow in his steps, and daily be made more like him. He, too, is "King of kings and Lord of lords;" and for ever blessed be his name, soon "every knee shall bow to him," and every "tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.

O how amazing thy condescension and love, Divine Redeemer, that, being God over all, blessed for ever, thou, the eternal Word, wast made flesh, in a wonderful manner; by the power of the Holy Ghost, so as to partake of our nature without the least spot of sin. And that we might be sure of this, God sent his angel from heaven to testify this thy grace and love first to Mary, and also to testify to Joseph that that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost. What was thus testified, thy whole life and glorious miracles of mercy confirmed. Thou only of all the sons of men wast without sin. O how great thy grace,

thou everlasting Son of the Father, that when thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb.

BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

Thus he had our nature, and was made "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh:" that he might recover us from our ruin. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." Heb. ii. 14, 15. Thus also he became "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," having been "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." O wonderful and mysterious union of the Godhead and manhood in one Christ! Well may we say, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh."

HE SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE.

The whole life of my Redeemer was a life of suffering; for throughout he was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" from his early circumcision and flight into Egypt to his bitter death. He willingly suffered all things for us, but after his unknown sufferings as marked by his agony in the garden, and his cry on the cross, his greatest known sufferings were under Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea; the Jews having at that time become subject to the Romans, and the sceptre having departed from Judah, Gen. xlix. 10. Thus the exact period of his sufferings in the world's history is fixed. How bitter thy agonies, O Christ! How cruel the insults and mockeries thou enduredst in being spit upon, scourged, and crowned with thorns, and derided; all which things thou, my Redeemer, passed through for my sake! May I ever bear in mind those painful sufferings as the consequence of sin, even my sin. May I hate sin with intense hatred, while I love my Savi-

our with most fervent love. O Jesus, all glory be to thee, for thy sufferings for our sins!

WAS CRUCIFIED.

His naked body was fixed to the tree, and his arms and his feet fastened with nails to it, and with arms extended wide, as if in his very death to signify how he embraced the whole world, he hung hour after hour on the cross, reproached and scorned, and blasphemed by those he came to save; and so, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, he put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself. There he "was made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13), "the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." May I look unto the pierced Saviour and mourn for my sins.

O Lord, what thee tormented
Was my sins' heavy load;
I had the debt augmented,
Which thou didst pay in blood.

I give thee thanks unfeigned,
O Jesus, friend in need!
For what thy soul sustained,
When thou for me didst bleed.

DEAD.

He, though the Son of God, really and truly died; his soul was separated from his body, and his body left without the least remains of life, undergoing for us the wages of our sin, which is death. Thou wast, O Jesus, "brought as a lamb to the slaughter; thou wast slain for us, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." All glory be to thee. And besides this great atonement thus made for our sins, "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." All praise and love be unto him.

AND BURIED.

We read, they laid Jesus in a new sepulchre in the gar-

den, wherein was no man ever yet laid. So his personal resurrection was more assured, and so the grave is made, O my Saviour, welcome to all thy followers ; for in their burial they are only conformed to thee, their Lord. Since Jesus my Lord died and was laid in the tomb, I will fear no evil in death or in the grave.

HE DESCENDED INTO HELL.

By hell is meant here not the place of torment, but the place of departed spirits. He descended into the lower parts of the earth. Eph. iv. 9. Quickened by the Spirit, he went and preached to the spirits in prison. 1 Peter iii. 19. He appears to have gone to the place of departed spirits, that he might undergo all the condition of a dead man, as well as of a living man, and give his people, though separated from their bodies, assurance of their resurrection at the last day. Praise, and love, and adoration be unto him who has "the keys of death and hell," and has vanquished all our enemies.

THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.

According to David's prediction, that his flesh "should not see corruption, nor his soul be left in hell," and according to his own foreshewing, that the third day he should rise again, our Redeemer did rise, and this so as to be seen by multitudes of witnesses after his resurrection, and even by five hundred brethren at once. He shewed his hands and his feet, and called his disciples to handle him and see. Most true and glorious, and unspeakably beneficial is this fact. He "rose for our justification." Rom. iv. 25. He rose "from the dead as the first-fruits of them that slept." 1 Cor. xv. 23. He rose as our head and representative ; as surely as he rose, so surely also shall all that believe in him rise again at the last day. And in spirit even now, "we are risen with him through faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead." Col. ii. 12. Glory, everlasting glory be to my risen Lord and Saviour. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who,

according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN.

While his disciples were beholding him, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight, a gracious earnest of that coming day of the resurrection of the saints, when, after the dead in Christ have first risen, "we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and meet the Lord in the air."

He is gone to heaven, there to appear in God's presence for me as my high priest; there he intercedes for me, there he prepares mansions for me, thence he bestows gifts upon me, and thence will return and receive me unto himself.

How joyfully would he be welcomed there by the heavenly hosts; and how widely has he thus opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers; and how joyful will his return be to his faithful followers here below! Thanks be unto him for evermore. May I be numbered with his people!

AND SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY.

That is, in the place of greatest dignity, power, honour, and glory; and on his Father's throne, adored by angels, and magnified far above every name that is named. There he remains as our Mediator and Intercessor, "able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him." He has also the power of his Omnipotent Father for our benefit, and has received all gifts for us, which he is ready to bestow on all who call on his name, even on the rebellious. Oh exalted Prince and Saviour, I rejoice in thy glory, I trust in thy love, I worship thee, I acknowledge thee to be the Lord!

FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

This is the blessed hope of his church, "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." I know that he will come again. I know that at his coming he will raise his dead saints, and change his living saints, and they will be raised up at the last day to life everlasting. I know that he will come with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all, first on the quick or the living; and while he will be glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe, those who know not God, and obey not his gospel shall be punished with everlasting destruction. I know that he will reign with his saints; and that finally all the dead shall be raised and judged according to their works. Knowing these things, may I ever be waiting for his coming, and looking for his appearing "the second time without sin unto salvation." May I be so prepared for it that the day of his coming may be to me the day of my fulness of joy, and that for evermore.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST.

With the same divine trust, confidence, and hope of blessing, which I repose in God the Father, and God the Son, I repose also in God the Holy Ghost; because my Lord and Saviour commanded that all nations should be taught and baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He is the Lord and Giver of life. He is the advocate and Comforter of the soul. He is the Teacher of us sinners. He dwells in his people, and thus their body is "the temple of God, and the temple of the Holy Ghost." 2 Cor. iii. 17; vi. 19. He sanctifies us, being the cause of all holiness in us; not only inspiring the writers of the holy scriptures, and raising up teachers from age to age, but enlightening our minds, quickening our souls, and purifying our hearts; he enables me to call God my Father, and Jesus my Lord; giving me the spirit of adoption, and assisting my prayers,

and bearing witness with my spirit that I am a child of God, and making me "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." O Holy Ghost, fulfil all thy gracious work in my soul, and let me never grieve or quench the Spirit, but daily walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The whole church of Christ all over the world is one body. 1 Cor. xii. 12—27. Rom. xii. 4, 5. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water, by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. v. 25—27. The word catholic means universal, and here comprehends the whole church of Christ, including all believers of every nation who have died in the Lord, as well as all now living in the faith of Christ, wherever scattered or dispersed. The church is outward and visible in its order, assemblies, sacraments, and confession of Christ, and in the lives of those calling upon his name. Thus, the apostle writes unto "the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." 1 Cor. i. 2. O what a blessed society is this; some with Christ above, and others journeying to be with him, and all a "royal priesthood and an holy nation!" May I ever manifest that I belong to this church, by abiding in Jesus and bearing much fruit.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

A saint means a holy person, one set apart and devoted to God to do his will. Every true believer in Jesus is a saint, for his faith purifies his heart, works in him by love, and enables him to overcome the world. The communion of saints is founded on our re-union with Christ Jesus. It is his prayer to his Father for those that believe in him,

that they may all be one, and he adds, "even as we are one ; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." The saints thus have a joint participation of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost; they are under the common care of angels ministering to them ; they have one word, the light of their feet ; one baptism of admission into the church ; one Lord's Supper to help them to feed on Christ ; their enemies are the same and their friends the same. They have one spirit of love to each other, one way in which they are walking, and one eternal home in which they will together dwell throughout eternity. O my Father, give me ever to remain in this one family, and to seek and rejoice in its welfare here, and partake of its sufferings and hopes now, and of its glories hereafter.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Here is that most precious doctrine without which I could have no hope: for my sins are numerous as the stars of heaven, and aggravated by my many peculiar advantages and the unspeakable loving-kindness of my God. But, adored be thy name, "there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared ;" Jesus hath appeared "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." We have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace." May this amazing grace, this wonderful goodness of God in blotting out my sins by the blood of his own Son, lead me to repentance. May I so credit it and so constantly behold it, living continually by faith in it, that my proud heart may be humbled, my stony heart broken, and my whole soul formed anew and filled with grateful, holy, and heavenly affections, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour ;" and I would tell every human being the glad tidings of his forgiving love, by which I am restored again to his favour, and can live in the light of his love.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

Here again is another wonderful fact which has been clearly revealed by God's word. "The hour is coming and now is, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." John v. 28, 29. O may I be kept from doing evil, and taught of God to do good. How glorious the resurrection of the saints, the same body which has been corrupted shall be restored. Job xix. 26, 27. "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. It is sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body." 1 Cor. xv. 1. As to those living when our Lord comes again, the bodies of all who believe in him shall be "changed and fashioned like unto his glorious body;" Phil. iii. 21: their bodies thus being made suitable for the perfected spirit, that body and spirit made like Christ and united together, may be for ever glorious together in the presence and joy of God. O what a victory this over death! what a triumph over the grave! a victory and a triumph already prefigured in the resurrection of every fresh day from the darkness of the night; of every fresh spring from the death of winter, and in the rising of each seed sown in the earth. May I, believing in Jesus, "Rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

This is the crown of the whole. And let me see distinctly what this life is; a life in the knowledge and enjoyment of God, and his Son Jesus Christ. For my Redeemer has assured me, "this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3. The want of this is that eternal death, in which the wicked are left in that "lake of fire and brimstone where the Devil and his followers are, and are tormented day and night for ever and ever." Rev. xx.

10. With what earnestness should I myself turn, and seek also to turn others, from everything that would lead to that fearful issue ; and especially from unbelief, now the great condemning sin. John iii. 18, 36 ; viii. 24 ; Mark xvi. 16. The true knowledge of God produces likeness to him and full happiness : " We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2. " Then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. The joys of this everlasting life no mind can fully conceive. They are, however, connected with our conduct here, " He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly ; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Dan. xii. 3. See too, 2 Peter i. 5—11 ; Rom. viii. 17, 18. O may my heart then be set and fixed on everlasting life ! May I willingly suffer now to partake of that glory hereafter. May I wholly confide in the record that " God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son Jesus Christ." May I know by blessed communion and fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, that I " have eternal life " (1 John v. 13 ; i. 1, 2.) and ever rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, " The true God and eternal life."

II. MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

1. THE LAW IN GENERAL.

Psalm xix. 7—11. " The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple : the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart : the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes : the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever : the judgments of the Lord are true and

righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward."

How false the views which men commonly take of the holy law of God! They think it hard and severe. They feel it a burden and weariness. They have no love to it. They see nothing of its goodness and beauty.

Such is the view of the world. God's view is very different: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments; then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." Christ's view of it is very different also. It was his meat and drink to fulfil it. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God; I delight to do it; yea, thy law is within my heart. I have kept my Father's commandment, and abide in his love. I know that his commandment is life everlasting." And all holy men partake of this mind of Christ, and can say with the Psalmist: "O how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day!"

Why is the law of God so precious in the sight of Christ and of Christ's servants? Why does God the Father so highly honour it? Why did the Son of God delight so greatly in obeying and fulfilling it? Why does the Spirit rejoice to write it in the hearts of God's people? Because it brings glory to God and happiness to man; because obedience to it is heaven, and disobedience to it is hell; because the law of God in the heart of all God's creatures is all that is needed, that they may be blessed, and God be glorified, for ever and ever.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul!" There is nothing too much required, and nothing too little for our guidance. It tells us all that we need to do. It points us to Christ to gain strength for doing it. It tells us who God is, and what he has done for us, and how we are to serve him. And it converts the soul. When the love of God's law enters the heart, the love of sin is driven away. It is a schoolmaster that brings us to him, and sets us like

Mary at his feet. It calls us from sin and vanity, to the love of God and of man. It points us to the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and then says—if ye love him keep his commandments.

"The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." It is given by the all-wise God. It testifies his holiness, his presence, his love, his goodness. It is sure; it does not deceive those who rest upon it. It is not like man's advice, uncertain or doubtful. We may depend on its truth; we may rely on its wisdom; for God, who gave it, has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And yet it is so simple, that the poorest may understand it. The simplest may learn what it means. And when they pray over it, and seek the grace of God to fulfil it, they will be made wise unto salvation.

"The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." They bid us do nothing, but what we ought to do. They forbid us nothing but what is for our harm. They call us to do no duty, for which God does not promise his grace, and which will not make us happier for ever, when we observe it from the heart. And when we listen to these statutes, they will first make us humble, that we have broken them so often; and then they will lead us to seek for pardon and peace; they will teach us to pray for God's Spirit to put them in our hearts, and then they will fill those hearts with peace and joy. O how happy, how joyful are those, who love the holy, blessed statutes and commands of God!

"The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." All things here are impure and unholy. God's commandments are pure themselves, and make those pure who receive them. They will teach us to love God, to love Christ, to love each other, to hate sin, to follow after holiness, to prepare for heaven. We are so blind without them, that we cannot tell what we should live for, what will do us good or harm, or how we may be saved at last, or serve and please God. These commandments can give light to our eyes. They teach us that the love of God is

the great thing we need. They shew us that we do not love God of ourselves. They teach us that we are guilty sinners, and need a Saviour. They invite us to love and serve that Saviour who has loved us and died for us. They prepare us for a world where sin cannot enter, where all will be holy and happy, and that for ever.

"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb."

So excellent are God's holy commandments; true and righteous, full of wisdom, more desirable than the most precious things of earth. O that we may prove their value! May we find them indeed to be our delight and our treasure, and be prepared by obedience here, for glory hereafter!

Prayer to know and keep God's Law.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, that I may keep them unto the end. O give me understanding, that I may keep thy commandments. Open thou mine eyes, O Lord, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. May this be my delight, my joy, my daily aim and study, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of thy will. Thus, O my God, may I live to thy glory here, and come shortly to thy blessed kingdom, where thy law will be found written in every heart, and thy praises be heard from every tongue. Grant this, O Father, for the love of thy only Son, our Lord and Saviour.

2. THE PREFACE.

Exod. xx. 1, 2. "And God spake all these words and said, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

God's mercies always come before his commands. He first shews us his goodness, and then claims our obedience. All his laws flow from his love. Because he seeks our

good he teaches us the good and right way, wherein we should walk. Blessed are they that hear and obey his voice.

What are we taught by this preface to the Ten Commandments? First, their authority, and our duty. They are the words of the true God. He who has made us, who preserves us day by day, who has given his Son to die for us, here speaks to us. He spake and the world was made. He speaks now to us, and if we listen to his voice, our souls will be made anew, holy and happy for ever. The angels in heaven do his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his words. How much more should we who are dust and ashes, sinful and dying creatures, hear the voice of our God when he condescends to speak to us!

But these words teach us much besides. They remind us of God's many mercies. He is the Lord; and heaven and earth are full of the majesty of his glory. And yet he is our God. By baptism we become his people, and he enters into a covenant with us, to save and bless us. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. He has graciously promised to own us for his children; we are solemnly bound to believe his word, and to keep his commandments. Behold then what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!

He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. They were oppressed and he delivered them. They were in bondage and he saved them. They cried unto him and he heard their groaning. Their enemies were too strong for them and he subdued them. He divided the Red Sea and made a way for his ransomed to pass over. He fed them with manna in the wilderness, and brought water out of the flinty rock for their thirst.

And has he done nothing for us? O yes, as great, and still greater works of mercy. He saw us lying in sin, in the darkness and shadow of death. He remembered us in our low estate. He heard the groaning of the prisoners. He sent his Son from heaven to be our ransom. He spared

not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all. The Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost. The good Shepherd laid down his life for his sheep. He has borne the load of our sins, that we might be free. He endured death, that we might live for ever. He has redeemed us from the curse, being made a curse for us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son a sacrifice for our sins." Our chains are now broken, our sins are borne away. Christ has suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might deliver us from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Great have been his mercies also to our nation, as to Israel of old. He has ransomed us from heathen darkness. Our forefathers were wild and savage, sacrificing men to their false idols. The gospel of Christ reached us, and that bondage was broken. Peace, holiness, and happiness began to visit our shores. Since then, we had sunk ourselves again in Popish idolatry. But blessed be his name, he has again ransomed us. The idols have again been banished. The light of his truth has again reached us, and once more set us free. Now we can worship God in spirit and in truth. We are no longer compelled to bow to stocks and stones, or to suffer death. Our God has freed us from that dark, Egyptian bondage. Blessed be his holy name for ever and ever.

And have we not each of us, received many mercies from the same gracious God? Has he not given us life, and meat, body and raiment? Has he not given us many comforts, and saved us from many dangers? Who can count his thoughts of love toward each of us? How great is the sum of them, more in number than the sand! Are we thoughtless, worldly, unholy, rebellious? He spares us, bears with us, reasons with us, waits patiently for our repentance, has no pleasure in our death, but rather that we should turn and live. Do we love and serve him, and desire to please him. It is he that has changed our heart, and put within us a right spirit. It is he who day by day

pardons our sins, strengthens us for duty, guides our steps, numbers the hairs of our head, receives us as his children, refreshes us with his heavenly comfort, and prepares us for his glory. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"

Let us each then examine ourselves by these words of God. Is the Lord my God? Do I love him, serve him and fear him? Do I remember that I am, by baptism, brought into covenant and under a vow, to believe his word and to keep his commandments? Do I bear in mind his past mercies to me and to all men? Do I think much on his love in sending his Son to die for me? Do I see and know that sin is a deadly bondage? Do I long to be freed from it? Do I believe that God is willing and able to set me free? And do I love him for this? "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." Am I keeping them? or at least am I desiring to keep them, and praying to God for his Holy Spirit, that I may please and serve him, in righteousness and holiness of life, all my days? "Blessed are the people who are in such a case, yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God."

Prayer.

Shew me, O Lord, thy mercy and thy goodness. Teach me always to bless thy name, and not to forget thy great benefits. Thou hast loved me, may I love thee greatly. Thou hast redeemed me, may I serve thee with freedom and joy of heart. Thou hast delivered me from the house of bondage, may I be thankful and joyful in the house of prayer. Thou hast brought me from the land of sin, death, and misery; may I worship thee for ever in the land of heavenly glory. And loving thee, may I have grace to keep thy commandments. May I never account them grievous, but wise and good. In thy service may I find perfect freedom, and in the knowledge of thy name life everlasting.

III. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 3. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

This is the first and great commandment. It charges us to have God for our God, and to renounce all false gods and false worship. What is it to have God for our God? It is to serve, to fear, and to love him: to remember his presence, to walk before him in holiness, to pour out our hearts to him in prayer; to trust in his care and providence, to commit our souls to his keeping, to rely on his grace and mercy, to listen to his voice and obey his commandments. Blessed are they who thus trust in him. He will guide and keep, and prosper and bless them. He will be their God for ever and ever; he will be their guide even unto death.

What is it to renounce false gods? It is to have nothing that we fear or love more than God. If we are more anxious, what we shall eat or what we shall drink, than to please God, then meat and drink are our god. If we are more eager to grow rich in this world, than to honour and serve God our maker, then riches are the false god we really worship. "No covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ." If we love our own pleasure more than God, we are worshipping a false God, and despising the true God, in whose presence there are pleasures for evermore. Whatever it be on which our hearts are fixed more than on God's service and his holy will, there is our false god, which we are setting up in our hearts, and transgressing this first and great commandment.

Prayer.

Search me, O God, and prove my heart; try me and examine my thoughts. If there is any thing I fear more than thy anger, shew me, O God, and forgive me and teach me to fear thee only. If I love pleasure or money, or any

earthly thing more than thee, forgive me, O gracious God, and teach me to love thee above all things. Shew me thine own love to me, in creating, preserving and redeeming me, that I may love thee with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Keep me from every secret idol, and make my heart a temple to thy praise and glory.

IV. THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 4—6. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

This command unfolds and confirms the former. All idol-worship is solemnly forbidden, whether it be the worship of the knees, the lips, or the heart. There is nothing in heaven, or earth, or sea, worthy to share God's honour. Glory is due to his name, and to his only. We may not make idols of our talents, our property, our family or friends, or fancied good works; no, nor in any real excellence that God may have given us. The elders in heaven cast their crowns at the foot of the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive the honour, and glory, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created."

See here the evil of sin. It sets all the creatures of God against God himself. All the works of his hand which he made for his own glory, sin turns into idols to his dishonour. It insults God; it ruins man. And what is the opposite duty here taught us? It is to see God in all his works: to adore his majesty when we view the heavens; to praise his goodness, when we look upon the earth; to mark his unsearchable depth of wisdom, when we gaze

upon the waters. It is to see in all the creatures he has made, something of his power, wisdom and love. It is to rise through these earthly shadows, to behold Christ himself, who is the truth and the life ; it is to join in the song of the blessed seraphim : " Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is full of thy glory." It is to use God's whole creation as a Jacob's ladder, by which our thoughts may rise to his throne in heaven.

What reason is given for this command ? First, that our God is a jealous God. He loves us, and will have no rival in the hearts which should be altogether his. He loves us, and hates those idols that are the ruin of our souls. He cares for us too much to suffer us to go on in sin, without great and heavy displeasure. He will surely punish us, if we forsake him. If we worship any golden calf, he will grind it into powder, and make us drink the dust of our heart's idol. He forbears long, but punishes at last. For two or three generations he may suffer sin to go on without seeming to notice ; but if the children persevere in their father's transgression, he will visit the whole upon their heads at last. Let us not think we are safe, because we are openly worshipping idols. Our fathers worshipped them in the times of paganism, and in the times of popery. And if we are not sincerely serving and worshipping God, their idolatry may still be visited on us. If we abuse more light and more opportunities, God may still charge their idolatries upon us their children. Let us not boast, nor be high-minded, but fear.

But God is not jealous only, much more is he gracious and merciful. His covenant of love is to a thousand generations. His anger endureth but a moment, and in his favour is life. He shews mercy to thousands of persons, to a thousand generations, towards them that love him and keep his commandments. What a stirring motive to entire obedience ! Then his love will rest upon us, his grace be sufficient for us, his favour encompass us as a shield. We shall be blessed ourselves, and blessings descend through us to generations yet unborn.

Prayer.

Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. O teach us to renounce every idol, and to yield our whole heart to thy service. Remember not against us our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers, neither take thou vengeance on our sins. May we love thee and keep thy commandments, and in keeping of them find a great reward. May thy grace rest upon us while we live, and when we die, and for evermore. And bless not us only, but thousands besides. Where sin hath abounded, let thy grace much more abound ; and let grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied to all thy people throughout all eternity.

V. THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 7. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

How often alas, and in how many ways this command is broken ! The name of God is great, wonderful and holy. He is the Almighty, the true and living God, the Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the only wise God, the King of kings and Lord of lords. How often his holy name is openly profaned, in cursing and swearing, in false oaths, and foolish exclamations ! How often we take it in vain, in our conversation, in reading, and even in prayer ! When we utter it without any fear of his greatness, or any thanks for his goodness, we take it in vain. When we talk of God without any thought of his constant presence and infinite glory, we take his name in vain. When we read his word carelessly and lightly, as if God were not speaking to us there, we take it in vain. When we draw near to him with our lips only in prayer, and forget him in our hearts, we take that holy name in vain. Day by day, we are very guilty concerning this, and very forgetful of this solemn charge.

Again we take God's name in vain, when we call ourselves Christians and live as heathens. For Christ our Lord is the only Son of God, God over all, blessed for ever. His name is the name of God. All are to honour the Son as they honour the Father. To say to him then, Lord, Lord, and to break his commands, is to take God's name in vain. To call ourselves Christians, and to live for this world only, to forget his word, forsake his house, neglect his sacraments, and slight his gospel, is to profane God's holy name. Whenever we forget our heavenly calling, to serve Christ, to be his children, to walk in love as he has loved us, to look for his coming, and hope for his glory—then we are transgressors against this plain command.

Prayer.

Who can understand his errors! Cleanse me, O God, from my secret faults. O teach me to fear this great and glorious name, the Lord my God! May thy name, O gracious and heavenly Father, be hallowed in my thoughts and words and life. May Christ be magnified in me, whether in life or death. Make me a Christian in heart, and not with my lips only; in deed and in truth, not merely in name. May I remember that I am baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And may I never, by unholiness and sin, give occasion to any to blaspheme that most holy name by which I am called. And at the last, O make me a pillar in thy temple, and write upon me thy new name for ever and ever.

VI. THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 8—11. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For

in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it."

The sabbath was made for man, our blessed Saviour declares, not for the Jews only. The command applies to us in all its substance and holiness. It enjoins us a weekly season of rest from labour, of special worship, of meditation on God's works, providence, and grace, of preparation for a sabbath of eternal glory.

Do we thus remember the sabbath? Is the Lord's day to us a holy day, a day of rest and peace? Do we cease from our worldly labours? Do we secure the rest of our dependants or families? Is there nothing to be seen in our houses on that day, but quietness, peace and prayer, love and praise? Do we banish vain thoughts, useless reading, and empty conversation? Do we meditate on God as our Creator, on Christ as our Redeemer, on the Spirit of God as our Sanctifier? Are we found every sabbath-day more and more prepared to join in the sabbath of heaven? Are our thoughts, our wishes, our prayers, all tending heavenward? Are we constant in attending the house of God, diligent in hearing the word of God, thankful and joyful in the worship of God? The day is hallowed and blessed by God himself: do we every sabbath long for and experience both its holiness and its blessedness?

Prayer.

O Jesus, thou Lord of the Sabbath, teach me to love and to improve thine own day. Meet with me on this day, and bless me as thou hast promised. Give me the true rest, a peaceful conscience, the sense of thy love, the assurance of thy favour, the hope of thy kingdom. Keep far from me vain and worldly cares, and fill me with heavenly thoughts and holy meditations. May I call the sabbath a delight, holy to the Lord, and honourable, and honour thee, not finding my own pleasure, nor speaking my own words. Thus by these earthly sabbaths, O prepare and fit me for a sabbath

that shall never end, with the spirits of the just made perfect, before thy throne.

VII. THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

" Exod. xx. 12. " Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

How pure and blessed are the words of God ! They are a tree of life to him that findeth them, and happy is every one that retaineth them. This one command, if only it were written in every heart, how would the world be changed from a land of darkness and the shadow of death, to a nursery for heaven. Then in every house there would be peace and union, holiness and love. What comfort to parents ! what blessings to their children ! what a continual growth and increase of happiness ! what happy generations training up in honour, obedience, and love, for immortal blessedness ! No strife, no disobedience, no fretfulness, no murmuring, but mutual delight, constant affection, overflowing thankfulness and joy. Then would the children in every house be as olive-branches around the table. Then would every family be a garden of flowers, soon to be transplanted to a heavenly paradise. There long life would be theirs, even length of days for ever and ever, and pleasures at God's right hand for evermore.

Prayer.

Shed abroad, O Lord, this spirit in every family of thy church. O that all parents might bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. O that all children might learn to obey their parents, and honour them in all things. And, O that, above all things, we may love and honour thee, our heavenly Father, and long exceedingly for the glorious revealing of the Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all !

VIII. THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 13. " Thou shalt not kill."

Oh! fearful issue of sin, that man should kill his brother, that Cain should be the murderer of Abel. Oh, still more fearful, that by our sins we should have crucified the Lord of glory himself! What is here forbidden? Every thought of malice and hatred; not the murder of the hands or the feet only, but the murderous eye, the murderous heart, the selfish will, the unforgiving spirit. There is no safe middle ground. He that is not for me, says Christ, is against me. He that is not aiming to love his neighbour as himself, will hate him when he stands in his way, and needs only temptation and fit opportunity to become a murderer. Out of the heart are the issues of life. From within, out of the heart, proceed murders. He that is angry with his brother without a cause, is on the high road to Cain's sin, and Cain's perdition. Be not high-minded, but fear. Say not, Am I a dog, that I should do such a thing? but pray rather that God would not lead you into temptation, but deliver you from evil. By the love of God, drive out from your hearts the hatred of your brother; by the grace of your dying Saviour, learn to lay down your life for the brethren.

Prayer.

From all blindness of heart, from pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, good Lord, deliver us. O, teach me so to love all men, that I may never harbour a thought of evil, nor give any place to the devil, who would tempt me to malice, and perhaps to murder. May I look to him who laid down his life for his enemies, copy his blessed example, tread in his steps, and be delivered from all malice and hate, into the glorious freedom of the sons of God, whose hearts are the temples of thy Spirit, and the dwelling-places of heavenly love.

IX. THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 14. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

"Marriage is honourable in all, but whoremongers and

adulterers God will judge." This sin and such as this degrade and pollute the soul, destroy the peace of families, dishonour God's most holy ordinance, bring down his wrath on the children of disobedience, make the earth corrupt before God, and full of violence, bring disgrace now, and ruin for ever. Without the heavenly city are dogs and whoremongers. The abominable and whoremongers shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Have then no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Seek rather above all things the fine linen of grace, purity, holiness, and heavenly love, to fit your soul for the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Blessed are those pure and virgin souls who are ready to enter into the marriage when the heavenly Bridegroom appears.

Prayer.

O thou pure and holy God, who searchest the heart, and knowest every inward thought, create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me. Make me pure within. May I love thee with all my heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and love my neighbour as myself, and prize and pursue with my whole soul that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake.

X. THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 15. "Thou shalt not steal."

How much crime and misery should we be spared, if this one short command of God were feared and obeyed! There would be then no need of bars and bolts, of anxiety and care; no midnight plundering, no secret pilfering, no fraud and deceit in trade. Thou shalt not steal. What are we forbidden to steal? Our neighbour's money, his time, his reputation. Why is this forbidden? Because of God's curse which it brings on us; because of the misery and

care which it brings even on those who succeed in it ; because of the disgrace, shame, and punishment of those who are detected ; because all thieves are shut out from the kingdom of God. What madness ! To steal a little gold or silver, and to forfeit a crown of eternal glory ! To steal to satisfy the wants of a perishing body, and to ruin an immortal soul ! To think of escaping the eye of man, and to forget God's eye that is always searching us ! To break into the house of a neighbour for a few earthly goods, and shut ourselves out from a house, a palace in heaven, that God is ready to provide for us ! From such blindness of heart, good Lord, deliver us !

Prayer.

Lord of all worlds, Author and Giver of every good gift, preserve me from ever wronging in any thing my fellow-creatures. Give me great tenderness of conscience in all my dealings with them, true uprightness of heart and freedom from all guile. May I willingly suffer wrong, and take joyfully any losses for thy name's sake, and have my treasure in heaven, through Jesus my Redeemer. Amen.

XI. THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 16. " Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

All the sins of the tongue are here forbidden. When we take up, and repeat a false report against others : when we delight to dwell on their faults or crimes ; when we exaggerate their failings ; when we have no mantle of love to cover their sins ; we break this command. When we think or speak of our fellow-men, as if they were not the creatures of God ; as if they were not loved by God ; as if they were not redeemed by the death of the Son of God ; as if they could not yet be sanctified by the Spirit of God ; we bear false witness against our neighbour. We bear, again, false witness against Christ himself, our best neighbour,

when we deny his Godhead, when we set at nought his sacrifice, when we slight his dying love, when we neglect his great salvation. We bear false witness against the unconverted, when we refuse to own that Christ has redeemed and bought them with his blood. We bear false witness against real believers, when we will not confess them to be the children of God, loved and chosen by him before the foundation of the world.

Prayer.

O thou God of truth, and holiness, and love, give me to know the truth, and by the truth to become free from sin and death. Set a watch before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips, that I offend not with my tongue. May thy grace and love so fill my heart, that I may ever open my mouth with wisdom, and the law of kindness may ever be the ruling law in my tongue, through Jesus the way, the truth, and the life, by whom I am to come to thee. Amen.

XII. THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Exod. xx. 17. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

How wise, how gracious in God, thus to fence round by his law, as with a hedge of fire, the property, the happiness and peace of all his creatures. God himself here becomes a shield and protector to the weakest and most defenceless. None may harm them without sin and punishment. "A father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation."

Prayer.

Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee. Shew us their fulness,

meaning, power, worth, beauty, and blessedness. May we all love the things which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so among the manifold changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

III. THE LORD'S PRAYER.

WITH PRACTICAL REMARKS UPON IT.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

We have here the perfect form and the chief pattern of prayer. The more we reflect upon it, the more we shall see the fulness of its petitions, and their suitableness for our situation, and for all our wants. What a spirit of holy union and love is such a prayer, constantly offered up in spirit and in truth, calculated to produce in all the churches of Christ through the whole world.

Our Saviour first poured out this prayer in the midst of his disciples to his and our heavenly Father, leading their devotions. This prayer is not therefore offered up explicitly in the name of Christ, but we should view him as presenting it in his own name, for his whole church, and for the full blessedness of our earth.

The filial confidence with which it opens, in calling God "Our Father," shews us the state of mind in which we should begin all prayer: seeing the love, and grace, and tenderness of him to whom we pray. In Christ Jesus he is truly our Father, and through him only who calls us

his brethren, can we with child-like confidence call God our Father.

The description of him,—" which art in heaven," shews us in humbling thoughts, what we have lost in the removal of his presence from earth, and what we may hope for in the restoration of all things, when again God will dwell with men. Rev. xxi. 3.

The great subjects of prayer are then opened to us in two leading views :—1st. What regards the glorious hopes set before us as the children of God ; and 2nd, what regards the present state in which we are living.

I. Our glorious hopes are set before us in three petitions.

" Hallowed be thy name." At present God is dishonoured in his own world ; the nations forget God ; but a day is here desired, as it is assuredly coming, when the whole earth shall be filled with his glory ; and this is the first and leading subject in prayer which should fill a believer's heart : the glorifying of God is the happiness of all creation.

" Thy kingdom come " is our next subject of prayer. At present the heavenly kingdom is only in spirit, and in the hearts of God's people, but the blessed hope is assured to us that " the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ : " and what an important subject of prayer is this ! When this is gained, universal " righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," is gained.

" Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." How full of glory and blessedness such a petition, bringing down heaven and its holiness and blessedness to our earth ! Oh ! the largeness and fulness of love in these requests !

Let these three petitions be accomplished, and sin and evil are banished from our world, and more blissful scenes than paradise in all its blessedness ever yielded are realized in every corner of the earth. How vast must be the grace of our Redeemer, in leading us to ask for such extended and enlarged blessings !

II. What regards THE PRESENT STATE in which we are living, comes afterwards. We ask,

1. "Give us this day our daily bread." Food for our bodies, and the bread of life for our souls, are the main wants for the daily support and sustenance of both. While here we are poor and needy: but we have a rich Father full of love.

2. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." If we are bid to ask for it, is it not sure to us on asking? and, oh, what love to the whole human race, to connect mutual forgiveness between man and man with obtaining forgiveness from God! While here, we are sinful and guilty, but God forgives us freely; may we then readily pardon all who acknowledge their faults against us.

3. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Surrounded with temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil, exposed to errors and afflictions on every side, how large and full are such petitions, and how suited to our situation!

Then rising up out of this mystery of God, and this abyss into which sin has plunged us, the prayer concludes with triumphant pleading, thanksgiving, and rendering glory to God: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." Amen.

Pouring out these desires, Christians become "a chosen generation and a royal priesthood," pleading for the blessedness of the whole earth.

O may it be so with my heart. Lord, teach me thus to pray, that I may rise to all the largeness, heavenly-mindedness, and full glory of true prayer.

Prayer for grace to help against vain repetitions.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who, when thou didst first give thine own prayer, didst solemnly charge us not to use vain repetitions, I do acknowledge before thee, with humiliation and grief of heart, how often I have thus perverted and abused prayer, so that my holy things have been full of

iniquity. Pardon my great sinfulness. Pity my exceeding weakness. I have sinned, and thou art my only High Priest, Advocate, and Intercessor. O both help me to see the awful danger of resting in the form of godliness without the power, and effectually and speedily deliver me from the vain worship of drawing near to thee with my lips only. Grant unto me grace really to worship God in spirit and truth. Let the Holy Ghost give me life, and unction, and power in the use of the words of prayer. Make me very watchful over my thoughts and affections, my desires and my words. Knowing that a man is not heard for his much speaking, may I never be content with mere formal prayer. Work in me to will and to do of thy good pleasure, so that I may stir up myself to lay hold on God, pray in the Holy Ghost, and ever offer unto God, in the strength of the Spirit, a pure offering, acceptable through thy merits, O Lord Jesus, to whom with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory now and evermore. Amen.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BOOK OF PRAYERS.

1. SCRIPTURE PRAYERS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Gen. xvii. 18. Abraham's prayer for Ishmael
Gen. xviii. 23. Abraham's prayer for Sodom and Gomorrah
Gen. xxiv. Abraham's servant's prayer for direction
Gen. xxvii. 28, 29
Gen. xxviii. 3, 4. } Isaac's prayers for Jacob
Gen. xxxii. 9—12. Jacob's prayer for deliverance from Esau
Gen. xxxii. 26—28. Jacob's wrestling with the Angel
Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasseh
Ex. xxxii. 11—13. Moses' intercession on Mount Sinai
Ex. xxxiii. 12—16, 18.
Ex. xxxiv. 9. } Moses' prayers for the presence of God
Numb. vi. 24—26. The priest's blessing
Numb. x. 35, 36. Moses' when the ark set forward and rested
Numb. xii. 13. Moses' intercession of Miriam.
Numb. xiv. 13—19. Moses' intercession for the murmurers
Numb. xvi. 22. Moses and Aaron for the congregation when Korah rebelled.
Deut. iii. 24—25. Moses prays to see the promised land
Josh. vii. 7—9. Joshua's prayer when the Israelites were smitten at Ai
Judges vi. 13, 36—39. Gideon's expostulation and prayer for a sign
Judges x. 10—16. The penitence of the children of Israel
Judges xiii. 8, 9. Manoah's prayer about Samson
Judges xvi. 28. Samson's prayer for strength against the Philistines
1 Sam. i. 11. Hannah's prayer
2 Sam. vii. 18—29. David's prayer before the Lord
2 Sam. xv. 31. David prays against Ahithophel
2 Sam. xxiv. 14—17. David's prayer at the time of the pestilence
1 Kings iii. 6—9. Solomon's prayer for wisdom
1 Kings viii. 22—60. Solomon's prayer in the temple
1 Kings xvii. 20, 21. Elijah's prayer for the widow's son
1 Kings xx. 36, 27. Elijah's prayer at Mount Carmel
2 Kings xix 15—19. Hezekiah's prayer against Sennacherib
2 Kings xx. 2, 3. Hezekiah's prayer in his sickness

2 Chron. xx. 6—12. Jehoshaphat's prayer
2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. Hezekiah prays for the people at the passover
Ezra ix. 6—15. Ezra's prayer and confession.
Neh. i. 4—11. Nehemiah's prayer for Israel
Neh. iv. 4, 5. Nehemiah's prayer against Tobias and Sanballat
Neh. v. 19
Neh. vi. 9, 14
Neh. xiii. 14, 29, 31. } Nehemiah's prayers for the acceptance of his works

[A table of the Psalms has already been given in the 1st chapter. See also page 327.]

Prov. xxx. 7—9. Lemuel's prayer
Isaiah lxiv. Confession of sins
Jer. xv. 15—18. Jeremiah's prayer for remembrance
Jer. xvii. 13—18. Jeremiah's prayer for God's return to Israel
Jer. xx. 12. Prayer for punishment of persecutors
Jer. xxxii. 16—24 Jeremiah's prayer when the Chaldeans besieged the city
Lamentations generally—see especially
Lam. i. 20.
Lam. iii. 55. } Prayers in affliction
Lam. v. Prayer in the affliction of Zion
Dan. ix. 4—19. Daniel's prayer and confession
Joel ii. 17. Joel's prayer for his country
Amos vii. 2—5. Amos' intercession for Jacob
Jonah ii. 2—9. Jonah's prayer from the whale
Jonah iv. 2, 3. Jonah's repining prayer
Hab. i. 2—4, 12—17. Habakkuk's prayer in the prospect of the Chaldean invasion
Hab. iii. Habakkuk's prayer before the majesty of God

2. SCRIPTURE PRAYERS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Matt. vi. 9. The Lord's prayer
Matt. viii. 2. The leper's prayer
Matt. viii. 8. The Centurion's prayer for his servant
Matt. viii. 25. The disciples in the ship
Matt. ix. 27. The blind man
Matt. xv. 22, 25. The woman of Canaan.
Matt. xx. 21. The mother of Zebedee's sons
Matt. xxvi. 39, 42. Our Lord's prayer in Gethsemane
Matt. xxvii. 46. Our Lord's prayer on the cross
Mark v. 23. Jairus' prayer for his daughter
Mark ix. 5. Peter's prayer on the Mount
Mark ix. 24. A father's prayer for his son
Luke x. 5. "Peace be to this house"
Luke xi. 1. "Lord teach us to pray"
Luke xi. 2. The Lord's Prayer
Luke xiii. 8. Intercession of the dresser of the vineyard
Luke xv. 18. The returning prodigal's prayer
Luke xv. 5. "Lord, increase our faith"
Luke xviii. 13. The publican's prayer

Luke xxiii. 34. Our Lord's prayer for his murderers
Luke xxiii. 42. Prayer of the thief on the cross
Luke xxiii. 46. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"
John xii. 28. "Father, glorify thy name"
John xiv. 8. "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us"
John xvii. Our Lord's prayer with his disciples
Acts i. 6. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"
Acts i. 24. The Apostles' prayer before the ordination of Matthias
Acts iv. 24. The Apostles' prayer upon the opposition of the chief priests and elders
Acts vii. 60. Stephen's prayer for his murderers
Acts ix. 6. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"
Rom. xv. 13. St. Paul's prayer for the Romans, that they might abound in hope
Rom. xv. 33. "The God of peace be with you all"
Rom. xvi. 20. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all"
2 Cor. xiii. 7. St. Paul prays that the Corinthians may be kept from evil
2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all"
Gal. vi. 16. St. Paul prays for peace and mercy on all the regenerate
Eph. iv. 15—23. St. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians that they might know Christ
Eph. iii. 14—19. That Christ might dwell in their hearts
Phil. i. 9—11. St. Paul's prayer for the Philippians that they might be filled with the fruits of righteousness
1 Thess. iii. 11—13. St. Paul's prayer for the increasing love and holiness of the Thessalonians
1 Thess. v. 23. His prayer for their sanctification
2 Thess. i. 11, 12. Prayer for the spiritual welfare of the Thessalonians
2 Thess. ii. 16, 17, St. Paul's prayer for the comfort and establishment of the Thessaloniaus
2 Thess. iii. 16. His prayer for their peace
1 Tim. i. 2. St. Paul's prayer for Timothy
2 Tim. i. 16—18. Prayer for the house of Onesiphorus
Heb. xiii. 20. Prayer for the Hebrews' perfect sanctification
1 Pet. v. 10. Peter's prayer for Christians
Rev. i. 4—6. The apostolical blessing and praise
Rev. vi. 10. The prayer of the martyrs
Rev. xxii. 20. "*Even so come, Lord Jesus.*"

II. THANKSGIVING.

1. SCRIPTURE THANKSGIVINGS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Gen. xiv. 20. Melchizedek's thanksgiving for Abraham's victory
Gen. xxi. 6. Sarah's thanksgiving

Gen. xxiv. 27. The thanksgiving of Abraham's servant
Gen. xlviii. 11. Jacob's when Ephraim and Manasseh were brought to him
Ex. xv. 10. Moses's song and Miriam's
Ex. xviii. 10, 11. Jethro's thanksgiving
Judges v. Song of Deborah
1 Sam. ii. 1—10. Hannah's Thanksgiving
2 Sam. xxii.
1 Chron. xvi. and xxix. } David's Psalms of thanksgiving
2 Chron. xx. 21. Jehoshaphat's thanksgiving before victory
Ezra vii. 27, 28. Ezra's thanksgiving
Neh. ix. 5. The Levites' song of praise

[A table of the Psalms has already been given in the 1st chapter. See also page 358.]

Isaiah xii. A song of praise for God's mercies to Zion
Isaiah xxv. xxvi. Praise to God for his victorious salvation

2. SCRIPTURE THANKSGIVINGS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Matt. xi. 25. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"
Luke i. 42—55. Thanksgiving of Mary and Elizabeth
Luke i. 68. The thanksgiving of Zacharias
Luke ii. 14. The angels' song
Luke ii. 29. The song of Simeon
Luke xix. 38. Thanksgiving of the disciples on Christ's entry into Jerusalem
Rom. vi. 17. St. Paul thanks God for the obedience of the Romans
Rom. vii. 25. For deliverance from the body of death
1 Cor. xv. 57. For victory over death.
2 Cor. ix. 15. For his unspeakable gift
Eph. i. 3. For spiritual blessings in Christ
1 Tim. i. 12. For being put into the ministry
2 Tim. i. 3. For his remembrance of Timothy
Rev. i. 5. Thanksgiving for redemption
Rev. iv. 8—11. The song of the living creatures and of the elders
Rev. v. 9—14. The new song, and song of the thousands around the throne, and of all creatures
Rev. vii. 9, 10. The song of the great multitude which no man could number
Rev. xi. 16—18. The great voices in heaven and the answer to the elders
Rev. xvi. 5, 6. The angel of the waters praises God for his righteous judgments
Rev. xix. 5—8. All THE SERVANTS of God unite in Hallelujahs.

PRIVATE PRAYERS.

PRIVATE MORNING PRAYER.

Psalm iii. 5. "I laid me down and slept ; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me."

Heavenly Father, I come to thee, grateful for all thy care and love, and to offer my thanksgivings unto thee in the name of Jesus Christ. It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High : to shew thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. Every comfort I have, comes from thee. Every evil which is turned from me, is kept off by thy kind providence. That I now, though so sinful, can come so freely and with such just confidence to thy throne of grace, and tell my whole desire unto thee, is owing to thine own infinite love in giving Jesus to be my Mediator and High Priest, in whom also thou hast given me eternal life. Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore ; from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised.

O keep in my mind this day a constant sense of thy presence and thy love, and fill me with hearty desires to do thy will, and to glorify thee in all things. Thou seest how surrounded I am with temptations, how weak I am in myself, how blind and ignorant, and how inclined to all evil. But thou hast given me in Christ Jesus all things pertaining to life and godliness, and thy will is my sanctification ; O my Father, help me then to look off everything else, and to look unto Jesus. Give me grace to live by faith in him. Make Jesus to me this day wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. May thy fear subdue all other fear, thy love overcome and regulate all other love, and thy law be the path in which I constantly walk. O let thy glory be the great end at which I aim in all I think and say, and do this day.

Help me through the day to dwell in love ; supreme love to God ; special love to my fellow Christians, and sincere love to all men ; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, give me strength to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.

Lord, help me not to look on my own things, but on the things of others also. Bless my dear relations. [Here name parents or children, brothers or sisters, husband or wife, master or servant, or any other immediate connection.] Bless my beloved Christian friends. [Here name them.] Bless my neighbours and acquaintance ; and if any have wronged or injured me, Lord, I pray for their good and welfare. Bless the ministers of thy word everywhere. Send forth labourers into thy harvest through the earth. Convert thy people Israel to Christ, and bring in the fulness of the Gentiles, and let the Redeemer speedily return in his glory to bless the earth.

O hear me, not according to my feeble words, but thine own infinite grace and mercy in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

PRAYER AT NOON DAY.

Psalm lv. 16, 17. "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. In the evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud : and he shall hear my voice."

O my Father, full of mercy and loving-kindness, holiness, and truth, it is my privilege at all times, through the power of thine own Spirit, to come into thy presence by Christ Jesus, and to let my requests be made known unto thee by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Give me the full enjoyment of this blessing. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon : and may I find repose and provision with thy people. Be my shepherd, restore my soul, and lead me in the paths of righteousness for thy name's sake.

O my God, I live in the midst of a world lying in wicked-

ness, and my own heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and I have no helper but thyself; no Saviour but God my Saviour. Help me then ever to delight myself in thee, to commit my way unto thee, and to trust in thee! and do thou thyself work in me to will and to do of thy good pleasure, and bring forth my righteousness as the light, and my judgment as the noon-day.

O give me grace, while in the world, to come out and be separate from it, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them! Help me to live as a stranger and pilgrim, having here no continuing city, but seeking one to come; and with this hope to abstain from all fleshly lusts which war against the soul. Make me a real blessing to all around me. Give me a heart overflowing with tender feelings of holy love to every human being; as made by thy power, redeemed by thy Son, and having the same promises with myself of thine own Spirit. May I have this grace, not to seek mine own things, but the things of the Lord Jesus, and in every thing to regard his approval in the quickly coming day of his appearing. For that appearing may I be constantly looking and preparing, hasting on to that happy kingdom where we shall see his face, and his name shall be on our foreheads, and there shall be no night there, and they need no candle nor light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

What thanks I owe thee for such hopes, and the prospect of such a glory! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name, who redeemeth thy life from destruction and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Receive my prayer and thanksgivings through him who hath redeemed me with his own blood. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

PRIVATE EVENING PRAYER.

Matt. vi. 6. "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy

Father, which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

O Lord, my God and my Father, who seest me now in secret, and hast bid me, in thy word, to pour out my heart before thee, help me now to call upon thy holy name, through Jesus, the way by which I come now to thee, and by his Spirit, through whose help I would now worship thee.

My sins are very many, and my iniquities prevail against me: but I believe thine own word, Oh help my unbelief, that as for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away. O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee. O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant, and save me for thy mercies' sake. Help me, O God of my salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver me, and purge away my sins, for thy name's sake.

O how great is thy goodness, in revealing thyself to me as a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; a just God, and yet a Saviour! Help me then to return with my whole heart unto thyself, who hast redeemed me. Grant that I may indulge no allowed sin in my heart or in my life. Enable me to forsake every evil way, and have respect unto all thy commandments. May thy testimonies be my counsellor, and may I delight to do thy will.

O my God, give me the joy of thy salvation. Help me to trust in thy holy name, that my heart may rejoice in thee always, and God may be my exceeding joy, and the portion of my inheritance and my cup.

I pray thee to deliver me from the mere form of godliness, and give me its lively and joyful reality. May I have true fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. May thy word be the daily food of my soul, and the nourishment of all lively, holy, and spiritual affections in me, and may thy Holy Spirit constantly dwell in me. Keep me watchful, and looking for the coming of the day of Christ, that I may always be ready for the return of him who is my Lord and my Judge, my King and my Redeemer.

And everywhere may thy people come behind in no gift or grace, waiting for the coming of the Lord. O make ready a people prepared for him. Think of thy covenant, that in the seed of Abraham all nations shall be blessed, for the earth is full of darkness, sin, and cruelty. May thy people everywhere have grace to be as the salt, with all its savour, seasoning and preserving the earth from corruption. May thy blessing rest on my own family, my own relations, my own ministers, and church and country. O our God, bless us with all spiritual things, in heavenly things in Christ Jesus, for his name's sake. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

LITANY, TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH WITH ALTERATIONS.

O God, the Heavenly Father, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

O God the Son, the Saviour of the world, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

O God the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

Spare us, O thou the one living and true God, and let thy grace speedily help us.

Pardon all our great and many iniquities. Give us true faith and repentance. Keep us from all sin, from all error, from all evil: protect us from the wiles and snares of the devil; from sudden and unhappy death; from pestilence and famine; from war, and the shedding of blood; from sedition and discord; from storm and tempest; from fire and wicked men, and from eternal death, "Good Lord, spare us."

O Lord Jesus Christ, help us by the merits of thy holy birth, by thy bitter sufferings, by thy bloody sweat, by thy agony, by thy painful death on the cross, by thy resurrection, and by thy ascension.

At the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, help us, O Lord.

Although we are unworthy sinners, yet, we beseech thee, "Great God, to hear us."

Glorify thy name through the earth.

Rule and govern thy holy Christian church.

Maintain all its bishops, pastors, and ministers, in the doctrine of salvation, and in holiness of life.

Deliver and keep thy church from evil and mercenary pastors.

Prevent all divisions, schisms, and offences.

Bring back those who are in error, and wandering from thee, and bruise Satan under our feet.

Send faithful labourers into thy harvest.

Make thy word powerful to convert, save, and bless, through thy Spirit. Comfort by it afflicted hearts. Support, by thy divine consolations, all those who, tried by violent temptations, are cast down in spirit.

"O Lord, hear us."

Establish between the kings, princes, and lords of the earth, concord; and give peace with thyself everywhere.

Bless our gracious Queen. May her reign promote the advancement of thy kingdom and the good of thy church; and may she ever be victorious over thy enemies. Guide all her counsellors with thy Spirit, to maintain thy truth among us.

Enlighten, guide, and protect our magistrates, and all thy people.

Bring down and subdue to Jesus Christ all power contrary to his kingdom.

Grant help to those who are in danger, and in any necessity.

Assist women with child, and bless those who nurse young children.

Take care of infants and youth, and cause them to be brought up in thy fear.

Comfort and heal the sick.

Deliver all captives and innocent prisoners.

Be the protector of widows and the father of orphans.

Make thy compassions to shine on all men, both Jews

and Gentiles, and bring them to the knowledge of thy truth, that they may be saved.

Pardon our enemies, our persecutors and slanderers, and convert them.

Give fruitfulness to the earth, and preserve its productions for our use.

"Lord, hear us. O Jesus Christ, Son of God, hear us."

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, be favourable to us, and grant us thy peace. "O Christ, hear us."

O Lord, deal not with us according to our sins, and render not to us according to our iniquities.

Almighty God, who rejectest not the sighs of contrite hearts, and despisest not the holy desires of those who call upon thee in their misery, regard with thy favour the prayer which we now, in our necessities, make to thee, and hear us through thy mercy ; that all the evil designs of the devil, or of men, may be overthrown and brought to nothing by the counsels of thy goodness. So that we, being victorious over all temptations, may give thee thanks with thy saints, and glorify thee for ever, by Jesus Christ, our only Saviour. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER FOR A LABOURER.

Gen. iii. 19. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken ; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."

Most merciful Father who hast given me, though dust and ashes in thy sight, and most unworthy of thy favour, those hours of sleep, which are so sweet to the weary, I give thee thanks for last night's rest, and this morning's fresh health and strength. All praise be unto thee, especially for that gracious Saviour, who carried our sorrows and bore our sins in his own body on the tree ; he is the true Sun of Righteousness, and may his light and love ever direct, cheer, and comfort my soul.

May I now go forth to my labour as a true follower of

the Lord Jesus Christ, to do his will and glorify his name. Give me thy grace that I may diligently, patiently, and faithfully serve my earthly master, as the willing servant of Christ.

Thou hast in wisdom and love appointed toil and labour for man, and that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread. Teach me by this both the bitter fruit of sin, and thy willingness that I should be delivered from the power and love of sin. Teach me also to labour for the meat that endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give me. Though poor in this world, make me rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom which thou hast promised to them that love thee, and enable me both to hope and quietly wait for that heavenly kingdom.

Especially, give me thy Holy Spirit to guide and comfort, to sanctify and strengthen me and my family, and friends, and neighbours, and all who love thee, this and every day, through Jesus my Redeemer.

Our Father, &c.

EVENING PRAYER FOR A LABOURER.

Matt. xi. 28. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Almighty God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, how good art thou in permitting poor sinners to come near unto thee by Jesus Christ! How kind and gracious is that Redeemer who says, come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!

Lord Jesus, I come to thee to find rest for my soul. Help me to take thy easy yoke and thy light burden upon me, and learn of thee, for truly thy ways are ways of pleasantness, and all thy paths are peace.

Oh, heavenly Father, by thine own Spirit draw me to Christ, that I may know him as my complete Saviour; who loved me even unto death, and whose blood has washed away all my sins. O give me sure trust in him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Many things have I done wrong this day, but forgive

them all for thy dear Son's sake, and give me grace to be more watchful, and to look more to thee for the time to come for thy help and strength.

Send thy glorious gospel through the earth, and let thy happy kingdom speedily be established in the whole world. Take me and mine under thy care this night, and give us quiet and refreshing sleep, for Jesus' sake.

Our Father, &c.

PRAYER FOR A LABOURER'S WIFE.

Prov. xxx. 27. "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness; her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

O thou from whom comes every good gift, and who hast said in thy word, a prudent wife is from the Lord; thou hast called me to this state of life, and I entreat thee give me grace that I may be that full blessing to my husband, and children, and family, that thou wouldest have me to be. What can I do of myself; even nothing; but thy grace is sufficient for me; help me to look well to the ways of my own household, and by forethought, care, and prudence, provide for them of what thou givest to us.

Give me a spirit of constant industry, and make me happy in my work. And oh, especially give me grace to watch over my dear children. Let me not spoil them by over indulgence, nor allow any evil way in them, but may I daily bring them up for thee; may I fulfil all my marriage vows to my husband, and submit to him, and make his home happy by my constant endeavours to do him good; so, in all things may I seek to adorn the doctrine of Christ with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; and to be subject to my husband as the church is to Christ. Hear me for his name's sake.

Our Father, &c.

PRAYER FOR HUSBAND AND WIFE TOGETHER.

1 Peter iii. 7. "Ye husbands, dwell with them accord-

ing to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered."

Almighty Father, who hast united us together in the strong, and tender, and lasting bonds of marriage, but without whose blessing we can have no solid comfort in each other as husband and wife, we kneel together now at thy mercy-seat to ask for thy blessing. O may we feel that we have come together, not only to be a help and comfort to each other for this world, but also for thy heavenly kingdom ; and may we ever seek first the kingdom of God, and thy righteousness for ourselves, and all our dear family. Help us to fulfil our duties to each other. May the husband gain full knowledge of thy truth and delight in it, that he may dwell with his wife, according to knowledge ; may he love her as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, and be ever preserved from all bitterness against her. May she have grace to submit to him in the Lord, and according to thy word. May we both have one heart and one mind in bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. O, according to thy most gracious promise, pour thy Spirit upon our seed, and thy blessing upon our offspring, that each child may be joined to the Lord, and devoted to him from its very youth. Provide for us all, bless us all, and do us good now and evermore, through Jesus our Redeemer.

Our Father, &c.

PRAYER FOR A SERVANT.

Gen. xxiv. 12. "Send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master."

O thou who art the king of glory, and who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet in infinite compassion to us sinners, left that glory, and took upon thee the form of a servant and humbled thyself to the death of the cross for our redemption, help me ever to rejoice in thy great salvation. I am indeed very sinful and evil, but thou didst bear my iniquities and art now

my living Saviour. Give me grace to see that thou hast in wisdom and love appointed my station for me, and being made free by the truth, may I be obedient to my earthly master, not with eye-service, as a man-pleaser, but as the servant of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill, doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men. Lord, give me grace to count my master worthy of all honour, lest thy name and thy doctrine be reproached. Lord, shew kindness to my master, and bless him. Make me faithful to his interests, patient under reproof, not answering again, nor purloining, but shewing all good fidelity in all things that I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour. Thus help me, O Lord Jesus Christ to glorify thy name, who hast bought me with thine own blood, and to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and evermore.

YOUTH'S PRAYER.

Eccles. xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth ; while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them."

O my Father, who art the guide of my youth, and my only defender from all the temptations and dangers to which I am exposed, I come unto thee in the name of Jesus Christ, to be taught and led by thine own Spirit in the way of everlasting life.

I am weak and ignorant, sinful and helpless, and though young in years, the imaginations of my heart have been evil from my earliest youth to this day. O Lord, forgive all my folly and vanity, my evil words and my sinful actions, and my forgetfulness of thee. Pardon every thing I have done wrong, and help me really to believe thy forgiving love, because thou gavest thy Son Jesus to suffer for my sins, and to bring me back to thyself.

I implore thy grace to assist me to remember thee my Creator now while I am young. Teach me to follow thy directions for a young man's cleansing his way aright, by taking heed thereto according to thy word. Grant that I

may ever so attend to thy word as to find it a lamp to my feet and a light to my path, giving me true wisdom in the midst of the many snares and deceits, and temptations of this sinful world : for Christ's sake.

PRAYER FOR A LITTLE CHILD.

Mark x. 14. "Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Almighty God, my most merciful Father, hear the prayer of a little child. Help me to know the great love which thou hast towards me, a sinful child. Make me a good child ; make me try to do what my father and mother bid me, and to be kind and gentle to every body. Give me all that is good, and take from me all that is evil. Give me thy own Spirit that I may learn to love Jesus Christ and follow him, and be one of his little lambs. Forgive all that I have done naughty in thy sight, for Jesu's sake. I thank God who sent his own Son to die for me, and who takes care of me every day. Pray God bless my father and mother, brothers and sisters, and every body, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

A CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER.

Prov. viii. 17. "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me."

Almighty and merciful God, look upon a sinful child, and teach me to pray to thee. I thank thee for taking care of me all this night. Give me thy Holy Spirit, that I may try to be good this day, and that I may please Jesus, who came to die for my sins. May I love him with all my heart, obey my dear father and mother, be patient and diligent with my teacher, and gentle and kind to my brothers and sisters. Put away from me lying and vanity. Do thou help me in learning my lessons this day, and make me try to be useful to my parents. Take away my naughty heart, and give me a new heart and a new spirit. Forgive me all that I have done wrong. Wash away my sins in

Jesu's blood. I thank thee, Lord, for giving me food and clothes, and friends to take care of me; but still more, for sending thine own Son to die for me. Bless my father and mother, brothers and sisters, minister and teacher, and all whom I love, and all who love thee. Pray God bless the Jews also, and the heathen, and every body, for Jesu's sake. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

A CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

Isaiah xliv. 3. "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."

Lord Jesus, who hast said, suffer little children to come unto me, teach me this night to pray. Forgive me all that I have done wrong this day. [Here say what you think has been wrong.] Oh keep me from again committing the same sins. Make me really sorry for my sins. Wash them away in thy blood, and give me sweet peace with God my Father. Take away my naughty heart, and, according to thy most merciful promises, pour out thy Spirit and thy blessing upon me, that when I die I may live with thee in holiness and happiness. Oh may I be ready for my Saviour's coming again, and dwell in thy heavenly kingdom for ever. Take care of me this night, give me quiet sleep, and may I awake in the morning to serve thee.

I thank my merciful and heavenly Father for taking care of me all day, and keeping me from harm, and for all the good things which thou hast given me, but most of all that Jesus died and rose again, and now lives in heaven, a mighty Saviour for me. Bless my dear father and mother, brothers and sisters; bless my minister and teacher; bless all whom I love, and every body, for Jesu's sake. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

PRIVATE PRAYER FOR SUNDAY MORNING.

Psalm cxviii. 24. "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."

O thou great, and good, and Almighty God, who art in heaven above, and hearest us who are living here below, and carest for us day by day, thanks be to thee for the Sabbath day. In thy thoughts of mercy to us thou hast commanded us to remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy: fill my heart, then, with thy Spirit, that it may be my delight to keep it holy.

O teach me thy wonderful love, in giving thy Son Jesus to die for a sinful world, and a sinful creature like me, and to rise again, as on this day, to be my living Saviour. May I love this day as the best of the days in the week, because it is the day, given us for thy worship and service, and shewing us the happiness yet in store for us in thy heavenly kingdom.

May I go to thy house with a joyful and grateful heart, and when there may I remember that God is a spirit, and seeks those to worship him, who worship him in spirit and in truth. Oh send thine own Spirit into my heart, to help me thus to pray and thus to praise. Keep me from vain and trifling thoughts. Open my heart to attend to thy word, and to what I shall hear from thy minister. May I keep in memory through the week what I learn this day. Oh Lord, let thy word preached by thy servants here and in all the earth be powerful, by thy grace, to convert and to save innumerable precious souls, and to comfort and profit all thy people. Especially bless my minister with abundance of grace, and all my dear relations and friends, and fill their souls with all heavenly blessings this day, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

PRIVATE PRAYER FOR SUNDAY EVENING.

Isaiah liii. 11. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."

Almighty Father, what thanks I owe to thee that I live in a Christian land, where thy holy day is observed, and thy house is open, and thy ministers have full liberty to preach thy word, and I can hear it, and have so many advantages for becoming wise unto salvation. And since thou-

sands and tens of thousands, millions and tens of millions, are now living in the earth without these blessings: Oh pity them, and send thy gospel to them; and give me grace really to prize my greater mercies, and duly to profit by them.

How much I need thy grace; for how wicked it is to draw near to thee with our lips while our heart is far from thee: and where was my heart this day! Oh my God, thou hast seen every vain, every foolish, and every wandering thought, while others could see, perhaps, nothing but seriousness and devotion. Forgive, oh forgive, the great sins of my holy things, and help me to look with faith, and love, and joy, to that blessed Saviour who bears my iniquities. Through him may I gain that peace which I can no where else obtain, and daily may I grow in grace and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Help me also now to be a doer of thy word; honouring all in authority over me, and loving all men, and especially those who love thee; help me to be obedient to thy truth, attentive to all my duties, and above all to remember thee, my Creator, and seek thee in this accepted time, and this day of salvation, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

FAMILY PRAYERS.

Forms of Prayer to be used in Families. From the Liturgy of the American Episcopal Church.

MORNING PRAYER.

The master, or mistress, having called together as many of the family as can conveniently be present, let one of them, or any other whom they shall think proper, say as follows, all kneeling:—

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil ; for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being ; we, thy needy creatures, render thee our humble praises, for thy preservation of us from the beginning of our lives to this day, and especially for having delivered us from the dangers of the past night. To thy watchful providence we owe it that no disturbances have come nigh us or our dwelling, but that we are brought in safety to the beginning of this day. [When disturbances of any kind befal a family, instead of this, say—that notwithstanding our dangers, we are brought in safety to the beginning of this day,] For these thy mercies we bless and magnify thy glorious name ; humbly beseeching thee to accept this our morning sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, for his sake who lay down in the grave, and rose again for us, thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dedication of ourselves to God.

And since it is of thy mercy, O gracious Father, that another day is added to our lives, we here dedicate both our souls and our bodies to thee and to thy service, in a sober, righteous, and godly life. In which resolution do thou, O merciful God, confirm and strengthen us ; that as we grow in age we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer for Grace.

But, O God, who knowest the weakness and corruption of our nature, and the manifold temptations which we daily meet with, we humbly beseech thee to have compassion on our infirmities, and to give us the constant assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that we may be effectually restrained from sin and excited to our duty. Imprint upon our hearts such a dread of thy judgments, and such a grateful sense of thy goodness to us, as may make us both afraid and

ashamed to offend thee. And, above all, keep in our minds a lively remembrance of that great day, in which we must give a strict account of our thoughts, words, and actions : and, according to the works done in the body, be eternally rewarded or punished, by him whom thou hast appointed the judge of quick and dead, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In particular we implore thy grace and protection for the ensuing day. Keep us temperate in our meats and drinks, and diligent in our several callings. Grant us patience under any afflictions thou shalt see fit to lay on us, and minds always contented with our present condition. Give us grace to be just and upright in our dealings ; quiet and peaceable ; full of compassion ; and ready to do good to all men, according to our abilities and opportunities. [Direct us in all our ways, and prosper the works of our hands in the business of our several stations.] [*On Sunday morning, instead of this, say—and let thy Holy Spirit accompany us to the place of thy public worship, making us serious and attentive, and raising our minds from the thoughts of this world, to the consideration of the next ; that we may fervently join in the prayers and praises of thy church, and listen to our duty with honest hearts, in order to practise it.*] Defend us from all dangers and adversities ; and be graciously pleased to take us, and all things belonging to us, under thy fatherly care and protection. These things, and whatsoever else thou shalt see necessary and convenient for us, we humbly beg, through the merits and mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

The family being together, a little before bed-time, let the master or mistress, or any other whom they shall think proper, say as follows, all kneeling :

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ;

thy kingdom come ; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven ; give us this day our daily bread ; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us ; and lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil : for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Confession.

Most merciful God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and hast promised forgiveness to all those who confess and forsake their sins ; we come before thee in an humble sense of our own unworthiness, acknowledging our manifold transgressions of thy righteous laws. [*Here let him who reads make a short pause, that every one may secretly confess the sins and failings of that day.*] But, O gracious Father, who desirest not the death of a sinner, look upon us, we beseech thee, in mercy, and forgive us all our transgressions. Make us deeply sensible of the great evil of them ; and work in us an hearty contrition ; that we may obtain forgiveness at thy hands, who art ever ready to receive humble and penitent sinners ; for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

Prayer for Grace.

And lest, through our own frailty, or the temptations which encompass us, we be drawn again into sin, vouchsafe us, we beseech thee, the direction and assistance of thy Holy Spirit. Reform whatever is amiss in the temper and disposition of our souls, that no unclean thoughts, unlawful designs, or inordinate desires, may rest there. Purge our hearts from envy, hatred, and malice, that we may never suffer the sun to go down upon our wrath, but may always go to our rest in peace, charity, and good will, with a conscience void of offence towards thee and towards men : that so we may be preserved pure and blameless, unto the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Intercession.

And accept, O Lord, our intercessions for all mankind. Let the light of thy gospel shine upon all nations ; and may as many as have received it live as becomes it. Be gracious unto thy church, and grant that every member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, may serve thee faithfully. Bless all in authority over us ; and so rule their hearts and strengthen their hands, that they may punish wickedness and vice, and maintain thy true religion and virtue. Send down thy blessings, temporal and spiritual, upon all our relations, friends, and neighbours. Reward all who have done us good, and pardon all those who have done or wish us evil, and give them repentance and better minds. Be merciful to all who are in any trouble ; and do thou, the God of pity, administer to them according to their several necessities, for His sake who went about doing good, thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thanksgiving.

To our prayers, O Lord, we join our unfeigned thanks for all thy mercies ; for our being, our reason, and all other endowments and faculties of soul and body ; for our wealth, friends, food, and raiment, and all the other comforts and conveniences of life. Above all, we adore thy mercy in sending thy only Son into the world, to redeem us from sin and eternal death, and in giving us the knowledge and sense of our duty towards thee. We bless thee for thy patience with us, notwithstanding our many and great provocations ; for all the directions, assistances, and comforts of thy Holy Spirit ; for thy continual care and watchful providence over us through the whole course of our lives ; and particularly for the mercies and benefits of the past day : beseeching thee to continue these thy blessings to us, and to give us grace to shew our thankfulness in a sincere obedience to his laws, through whose merits

and intercession we received them all, thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer for Protection.

In particular, we beseech thee to continue thy gracious protection to us this night. Defend us from all dangers and mischiefs, and from the fear of them, that we may enjoy such refreshing sleep as may fit us for the duties of the following day. Make us ever mindful of the time when we shall lie down in the dust; and grant us grace always to live in such a state, that we may never be afraid to die: so that living and dying we may be thine, through the merits and satisfaction of thy Son Christ Jesus, in whose name we offer up these our imperfect prayers. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all, evermore. Amen.

On Sundays, and on other days, when it may be convenient, it will be proper to begin with a chapter, or part of a chapter, from the New Testament.

SHORT FAMILY PRAYERS.*

MORNING FAMILY PRAYER.

Matt. xviii. 20. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Almighty Father, according to thy word, we thy most sinful creatures, come unto thee in the name of Jesus Christ, and ask for thy Holy Spirit to help us to pray.

We thank thee, O Father, for keeping us from all evil through the past night, giving us quiet rest, and restoring us in peace to the blessings of another day. We praise thee for the light of the glorious gospel, and for the free

* These prayers may easily be enlarged by selections from the other prayers and thanksgivings of this work.

pardon of all our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ thy Son.

We beseech thee, help us to walk in thy ways this day. Give us grace to deny ourselves, and teach us to do thy will. Give and increase in us true and living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and enable us to love him in sincerity, and to love others for his sake. Help us to be diligent in our appointed work, and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. O may thy Holy Spirit dwell in us, and teach, guide, uphold, sanctify, and strengthen us this day, and all our days.

Bless all thy people in the whole earth, especially those who are known to us. Bless our kindred, our friends, neighbours, and acquaintance, and may they all partake fully of the benefits of thy gospel. Look in mercy upon the poor and afflicted, and may their afflictions be blessed to their souls' good. And, O Lord Jesus Christ, hasten thy coming, that all the kingdoms of this world may speedily become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ.

Hear us, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

EVENING FAMILY PRAYER.

Jude 20, 21. "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Blessed be thou, O God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the mercies bestowed upon us this day. It is through thy loving kindness that we have been protected and provided for, helped and brought in peace together around thy throne of grace. But above all, praise and glory be to thee for that blessed Saviour, who is our life, our righteousness, and our strength, and for that Holy Spirit who is our Teacher, our Guide, and our Comforter.

We come to thee through our great Mediator, Jesus

Christ, confessing our many sins. We have not, O Lord, thought of thee, nor trusted in thee, nor loved thee as we should have done this day. In many things we have all sinned in thy sight, and we have not glorified thy holy name. We have lived far too much to ourselves, and have not lived to thee and to the good of others.

Give us godly sorrow for our sins; help us to look to Jesus and mourn; there is forgiveness with thee through his redemption: forgive us, then, all our transgressions for his sake, and assist us all so to believe in Christ our Saviour, that we may be filled with peace and love. O renew our souls by thy Holy Spirit.

Give thy blessing to us as a family, that we and all our relations and friends may walk in thy ways. Bless and prosper our Queen, and all in authority over us. Give grace to all thy ministers, that thy word may have free course and be glorified in every land.

And now we commend ourselves to thy care this night. O thou who never slumberest, preserve us from every evil, and refresh us by that rest which will renew our strength for the duties of another day, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Our Father, &c.

SHORT PRAYERS TO BE ADDED ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

IN SICKNESS.

Exod. xv. 26. "I am the Lord that healeth thee."

Look in mercy, O Lord, upon us; heal the sick. O forgive all our sins, and heal all our diseases, that we may bless thy holy name.

IN TROUBLE.

Psalm xlvi. 1. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble."

Lord, we are in much trouble ; O make it profitable to us, and help us through it, that we may see thy goodness and glorify thee.

FOR THE LORD'S DAY MORNING.

Isaiah lviii. 13. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable ; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."

Lord of the Sabbath, teach us to remember thy Sabbath, to keep it holy ; help us to turn away our feet from doing our pleasure on thy holy day, and to call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable, and to honour thee, by not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words, that we may delight ourselves in thee.

FOR THE LORD'S DAY EVENING.

1 Cor. iii. 7. "God giveth the increase."

We praise thee, O our God, for thy day, thy house, and the joyful sound of thy gospel. We now look unto Jesus, our great High Priest, who bears the iniquities of the holy things of his people, for pardon and acceptance. And thou, from whom alone comes the increase of the seed, give thy blessing with the truths which we have heard, that they may abide and grow in us, and we may become wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, and bring forth much fruit, by Jesus Christ, to thy glory.

SHORT FAMILY PRAYERS.

FOR EACH DAY IN THE WEEK.

SUNDAY MORNING FAMILY PRAYER.

Exodus xx. 8—10. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy

work ; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

Almighty Father, the Lord of the whole earth, who, after creating all things, didst rest on the seventh day, what thanks we owe thee for thy holy day, and for that most gracious direction to all men not to work on the Sabbath day, but to keep it holy. Thus hast thou in thy love provided for the quiet rest of thy people, and for our hearing those truths of thy word by which our souls may be saved. And O, most gracious Redeemer, who on this day rose from the dead, and on it poured out also thine own Spirit, what thanks we owe thee, as Lord of the Sabbath, for assuring us that the Sabbath was made for man, and appointing this, the first day of the week, that we might ever remember thy resurrection and the gift of thy Spirit, for us, who have so greatly sinned against thee.

Lord, help us to keep the Sabbath day holy ; not only by going to thy house, but by giving the whole day to the things of God. We praise thee, O Lord, for thy great goodness in creating us, and thy boundless mercy in redeeming us, and thy special grace in the promise of thy Spirit, and the many peculiar blessings which we enjoy in this much favoured land ! Lord, help us by thy Holy Spirit that we may worship thee in spirit and in truth in thy house ; that we may keep ourselves from vain, and worldly, and idle words, and through the day may read, and speak, and think of those things which belong to our soul's welfare. Especially may the love of Christ, who not only on this day rose again from the dead, but also poured out his Spirit on his church, be much in our thoughts, and warm and purify all our hearts. Give us grace to rise to him in heart and affection continually, and may his Spirit evermore dwell in us.

Bless our minister, and all the ministers of Christ. Bless our congregation, and all Christian congregations through the world, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

SUNDAY EVENING FAMILY PRAYER.

2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. "The Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary."

O thou, who art the God of all grace and mercy, everlasting praise be to thee, for the light of thy word, the comfort of thy gospel, the blessing of prayer, and the means of grace, this day enjoyed. And still more for the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for our sins, and all the provision of mercy made through him for our salvation.

Thou hast done great things for us, but we have not rendered again to the Lord our God according to all his goodness. Our hearts have been for the most part, hard, and cold, and dead, in thy service ; our thoughts have wandered much from our God, and even our holy things are full of iniquity. But Jesus, our High Priest, is our advocate ; through him, pardon us ; through him, accept us ; through him, save, and bless us, now and for ever.

And now, gracious Father, fix in our hearts the truths which we have heard, and may they be powerful, through thy grace, to produce in us the fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, to thy praise and glory. O may the seed abide in us, and bear much fruit, and not be choked by the cares of this world. Lord, send thy Spirit, to bring to our remembrance what we have heard.

And every where may thy word have free course, and be glorified, till the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters do the sea, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

MONDAY MORNING FAMILY PRAYER.

Psalm civ. 23. "Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, until the evening."

O thou who art the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thy only-begotten Son, in whom thou art always well pleased, and yet, for our sakes, it pleased thee to

bruise him, and put him to grief, that he might put away our sins ; all thanks be to thee for this inexpressible grace and love. Help us to follow in his steps, who was obedient unto thee, and died for us ungodly sinners, and teach us to walk humbly with thee, our God, all the day long.

Thou hast ordained that man should go forth to his work, and to his labour, till the evening ; assist us, then, joyfully to fulfil thy holy will. Even as our divine Redeemer was subject to his parents, and laboured with his reputed Father, so may we all be diligent in the work which thou hast appointed for us, seeking thy glory, and the good of our fellow-creatures, as the redeemed of the Lord, and as those bought with the price of his most precious blood.

May thy word be in our thoughts all the day ; and while busy in our daily work, may our hearts be refreshed by confidence in thy love, and the sweet assurance of thy presence and favour. Oh may the joy of the Lord be our strength, so that we may overcome all our sins and corruptions.

Guide and guard our rulers. Teach and bless thy ministers. Bless the whole church of Christ, as well as all our kindred, and send thy gospel to every living soul. Have mercy upon all sinners ; relieve the burdened, deliver the oppressed, save the afflicted, and speedily may that kingdom come where sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and there shall be no more curse, for the sake of Jesus, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

MONDAY EVENING FAMILY PRAYER.

1 John i. 9. "If we confess our sins, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Most holy and most merciful Father, we approach thy throne of grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. Thou hast told us, that if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins. Blessed be thy name for thy amazing grace to us sinners. Give us, then, thy Spirit to con-

vince us of sin, that we may truly confess it, and be grieved for it.

In many things we have all offended thee. We confess before thee, those sins which thine eyes have seen this day. Thou hast not been in all our thoughts ; we have turned each one to his own ways. By unbelief and hardness of heart, by seeking earthly things with eagerness, by love of the world, by losing sight of thy will and thy glory, by want of love to Jesus, and vain, proud, and evil thoughts, words, and works, we have sinned in thy sight. For thy righteousness' sake in Jesus Christ, pardon us, accept us, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Thou hatest iniquity. O deliver us, then, from our iniquities, create a clean heart in us, renew a right spirit within us.

But though we have rebelled against thee, thy mercies have not failed us. We praise thee for health and strength. We praise thee for food and clothing. We praise thee above all for the riches of thy grace in our free salvation by Jesus Christ. May that grace which bringeth salvation to all, appear to every human being in all its light, and love, and blessedness, that the whole earth may be filled with thy glory. O look upon weary and heavy laden sinners, and draw them to Jesus, that they may find rest. Provide for the destitute ; comfort the afflicted ; relieve all in distress ; turn sinners from their evil ways, and fill thine own people with holy love, heavenly peace, and constant joy. Send the gospel of Christ by faithful missionaries to the Jews and the Gentiles, and prosper all their labours by larger and larger gifts and graces of thine own Spirit, through Jesus our Redeemer.

TUESDAY MORNING FAMILY PRAYER.

Psa. cxliii. 8. "Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the morning, for in thee do I trust ; cause me to know the way wherein I should walk, for I lift up my soul unto thee.

O thou who hast graciously promised, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people,

O God of all grace, give unto us thy family, true faith in Jesus Christ, and the fulness of this precious promise. Be our God and our portion, our guide and our guard, our righteousness and our strength, our glory and our refuge, this and every day, and give us grace to be thy holy, obedient, and happy people, doing thy will, and rejoicing in thy love all the day long.

O that we may constantly see thy loving-kindness in everything, and find thy word a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths, guiding us in the way in which we should go!

We lift up our souls to thee for health and strength, food and clothing, and every needful good for our bodies. We lift up our souls unto thee for light and instruction, grace, mercy, and help for our salvation. Never leave us, never forsake us, but in all things go before us, and uphold us, and bless us even to the end.

And bless not only us, but let grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity; have mercy upon all men, and let that glorious morning speedily come when the Sun of Righteousness in his full glory shall rise with healing in his wings, and dispel for ever the shades of darkness and of death. Hear us for his name's sake. Amen.

TUESDAY EVENING FAMILY PRAYER.

Exodus xxx. 1. "Thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon. Thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat, that is over the testimony, where I will meet thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense EVERY MORNING. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps AT EVEN he shall burn incense upon it."

Almighty Father, thanks be unto thee that Jesus is our High Priest, who stands at the altar above, with much incense, to offer it with the prayers of all saints; we now come to thee by him alone. Do thou graciously meet us, and bless us with thine own presence, favour and love. O how well it is for us that thou hast provided a mercy-seat

for such sinful creatures. There we now come for fresh mercy and salvation.

Our sins are many, and they are great ; our hearts are evil, and we know but little of their evil. Thy law has been broken, and its curse is fearful ; thy gospel has been slighted by us and our guilt is grievous. We repent of this our sinfulness. We condemn ourselves, and come for thy grace to be justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

And O Lord, teach us, sinful as we are, to rely with our whole souls only on thy promised mercy in Christ Jesus. On that sure foundation may all our hopes be built, and believing in him may we follow the very steps of his holy life. Give us grace to set his example always before us, and daily to become more like him.

He is the light of the world ; and O may the time speedily come when every land shall enjoy this light, and every living soul shall know that our God is light and love, and rejoice in him alone. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

WEDNESDAY MORNING FAMILY PRAYER.

Lam. iii. 22, 23. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning ; great is thy faithfulness."

We give thee glory, O our heavenly Father, for all the fresh blessings of this morning. New mercies are given unto us with every new day. Our light and our life, our health and our strength, our food and our raiment, our home and all its comforts, our family blessings and all the endearments of our mutual love, we owe to thee. And earthly good is but a small part of thy loving-kindness. Heavenly blessings, without number, our merciful Father hast given to us in Christ Jesus, who by his death has redeemed our fallen nature, is gone up into heaven, and there appears for us as our High Priest, and forerunner ; and will come quickly again, that we may share his presence and glory

for ever. Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us, bless his holy name.

May all this love be a reality in our minds and hearts, through true faith in thy precious promises. Lord, help our unbelief, and remove it all away from us. May we see the great sinfulness and wickedness of all unbelief, and let not Satan delude us by setting evil before us as good, and darkness as light. May we this and every day be preserved from his many snares, and walk in the light of thy love, and in the joy of thy salvation.

And oh especially may the holy Spirit so help us that our conversation may be such as becometh the gospel of Christ, meek, humble, merciful and kind, joyful, holy, and heavenly, full of love, and full of good works, thus glorifying thy name, and becoming a blessing to all about us.

When, O our God, shall it be that this thy kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, shall fully triumph in all the earth according to thy promise. Hasten, oh hasten, thy coming and thy kingdom. Bring back thy people Israel, bring in the fulness of the Gentiles. Come to Zion, O thou king of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob, for thy great name's sake, and let the whole earth be filled with thy glory. Amen and Amen.

WEDNESDAY EVENING FAMILY PRAYER.

Psalm xiv. 1, 2. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense, and let the lifting up of my hands be as the evening sacrifice."

Wonderful is thy love, O our gracious God and Father, in the regard thou payest to the supplications of thy people which call upon thee. Thanks be to thee for that grace and loving kindness by which, through the blood of Jesus, our prayers become grateful to thee as the incense, acceptable to thee as thine own appointed sacrifice. How great is thy goodness in delighting in our privileges, and in giving us the bountiful law of thy kingdom, Ask, and ye shall receive!

We come, then, with our burdens and our sins unto thee ; in ourselves poor and needy, empty of good and full of sin ; but rejoicing in the assurance that there is forgiveness with thee. We cry unto thee, Most High and Most Holy God, who forgiveth all our sins and healeth all our diseases. Forgive our sins and teach us to believe thy love that they are forgiven. Heal our diseases, and may we inwardly know and feel that they are healed, by all the life of holiness and joy of spiritual health, having oneness of mind with thee in all things.

May we live as the children of God, and be his followers, as dear children, in every good word and work, shewing that we are his children, by bearing his image, and daily rising up to his likeness in love and holiness, in mercy and truth, and in goodness to all men, both just and unjust.

Bless the church of Christ in all lands, and extend his blessed empire till it cover the whole earth.

Lord, take us under thy protection this night. Keep us from every evil which Satan, or the wicked, or our own evil hearts, would bring upon us ; and guarded by thy power and love, may our wearied bodies be so refreshed by sleep, that we may rise with joy and strength for thy service and glory another day, through Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

THURSDAY MORNING FAMILY PRAYER.

Psalm v. 3. " My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord ; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."

O our Father, what a privilege it is, and ought to be, that thine ear is ever open to our prayer ! With all the uncertainties, and all the duties of each day ; with all the temptations, trials, and difficulties which we look for, or which may come unlooked for, in another day, we thank thee that this morning we are allowed to come to the throne of thy grace, and spread all our need before our ever present, almighty, and most gracious God.

Thou hast protected, provided for, pardoned, and blessed

us all our life hitherto ; thou hast led us, and guided us, and spared us, amidst all our sinfulness ; innumerable and most precious are the promises of thy love ; now may we, then, rely wholly on thee for strength and help this day. Thou hast said, Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is. O give unto us that entire trust in thee, which will bring glory to thy name ; and may we abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost : and give unto us that love which is thy glorious character, that dwelling in love, we may dwell in thee, and thou in us.

May we have grace to look off from vain and earthly things, which cannot profit, and to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, and to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. O make him this day unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, that we may be like Christ, and willingly suffer with him in the hope of his coming glory.

And especially give us a heart full of love to all men, for his sake. O God, bless our Queen, and all the royal family ; the Queen's council, and all those in authority under her. Guide thou the measures of the houses of parliament. O God, bless thy church, and all its ministers, and all its members, of every degree. Complete the number of thine elect, and speedily bring in thy promised and everlasting kingdom, through Jesus, our Redeemer.

THURSDAY EVENING FAMILY PRAYER.

Matt. viii. 16, 17. "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

O our merciful and compassionate Saviour, where should the weary and the sinful, the burdened and the heavy laden, come, but unto thee ! To whom else can we go,

but to thee, who lookest upon these our infirmities with pity, and barest our sicknesses, and art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! Hear us, then, O Lord and Master, and help us.

Many, and most sinful, are our wanderings of heart and mind from God, our Father;—much we forget his presence and his glory; much we live to ourselves; and so all is dark within, and we spend our days in vanity and sinfulness. Break, O Lord, the chains of sin, loose our bonds, and make us free; free to love and delight in God, and free, with a glad heart, to run in the way of thy commands. Let thy great salvation be known and believed, and welcomed in each of our hearts, and all its blessed effects be seen in each of our tempers and conversation and conduct.

How great thy goodness to us, O heavenly Father, during the past day. Thou hast been about our path, and watched over us in all our ways, preserving us from evil, and caring for us, and giving us good continually. Thy word and thy providence, thy grace, and the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, continually testify thy holy love to us sinners; and we now, therefore, praise thy holy name, and return unto thee, our God and Saviour, with our whole heart, and would evermore rejoice in thee, and walk in thy ways. Give us, then, O Father, through thy dear Son, thy Holy Spirit, to abide with us this night and for ever. Amen.

FRIDAY MORNING FAMILY PRAYER.

Isa. liii. 5, 6. "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

O thou, who so loved us sinners, that it pleased thee to commend thy love to us in giving thy Son to die for us, when ungodly and without strength, that we might with a free heart return unto thee: for all the ages to come may

this thy grace and loving-kindness to thy most sinful creatures be magnified by us, thy redeemed people. May we, with full assurance of faith, know that Christ has bought us with his blood, and that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing our trespasses unto us. And may we find more and more the power of this truth, to work in us true repentance, and lively faith, and to sanctify us, and give us the liberty of the children of God.

This very day, feeling that we are not our own, but bought with a price, may we glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are his ; yielding ourselves unto thee, as those baptized into the death of Jesus, and alive unto God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. According to thy faithful promises, give unto us thy Holy Spirit, to teach and enlighten us, to guide and purify us, to strengthen and comfort us. O Spirit of the living God, lead us, and dwell in us, and be in us a spirit of adoption, this, and every day, enabling us with humble confidence to cry unto the great Lord of heaven and earth, Abba, Father.

Give us grace to walk worthy of our high calling. May it be evident by our grateful and thankful spirit, that we belong to the chosen people, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, and the peculiar people, who are called out of darkness into thy marvellous light. And Oh ! increase that blessed company, among ourselves, our neighbours, our country, and through the whole world, for Jesus Christ's sake.

FRIDAY EVENING FAMILY PRAYER.

James v. 16. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man, availeth much."

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the family in heaven and earth is named, we thank thee for all those many mercies which we, as a family, have received from thy grace and goodness : all our peace and love, all the provision for our daily wants, and the

different relations of parents and children, masters and servants, come from thee, the one Parent of us all, for our mutual comfort and edification, and for thy glory. And all our religious advantages, and spiritual blessings, are from thy gift and mercy.

We desire this evening to confess together unto thee our faults against thee and against each other. O forgive all our folly and selfishness ; all our pride and vanity, all our unholy differences, and evil words, and unkindness. We have not sought each other's soul's welfare, nor loved each other as we ought to have done. We have all forgotten thee ; we have all rebelled against thee. We have all sinned, and come short of thy glory ; and the wages of sin is death, and we might have justly been left to perish in our sins. But thou, O our God, hast solemnly sworn that thou hast no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live ; turn thou us, then, and we shall be turned. Heal thou all our spiritual diseases. We pray for each other, that thou wilt give to each what each needs for their soul's health. O Lord, hear us. O Lord, answer us. None other can help us ; none other can save us, but thyself alone.

Bless, also, with thy grace and favour, all our family relations, and friends ; guide, direct, and bless the authorities thou hast appointed over us. Provide for the poor and afflicted. Convert sinners to thyself. Preserve us from evil men. Peace be unto thy church, and the Israel of God. Send forth labourers to gather Jew and Gentile to Christ. Fulfil all thy gracious promises, in establishing quickly thine own kingdom and glory over the earth, for Christ's sake. Amen.

SATURDAY MORNING FAMILY PRAYER.

Psalm lix. 16, 17. "But I will sing of thy power ; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning : for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing ; for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy."

Blessed be our heavenly Father, who does not leave himself without constant witness of his love, day by day. During the defenceless hours of darkness we have been safe under thy protection ; the morning light we owe to thy love. Thanks be unto him who daily loadeth us with his benefits. He that is our God is the God of salvation ; and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death.

The same continued care and love we now ask of thee for this day. In thee we live, move, and have our being : may we live in the constant remembrance that every breath we draw, every step we take, every thing we do, or hope for, or fear, is all under the direction of thy constant providence, and our whole strength is in thee. Watch over us for good. Help us wholly to confide in thee, as altogether righteous and good in all thy ways, and one who has made provision for the salvation of all who call upon thy name, through the Lord Jesus Christ. Give unto us, then, all things needful and profitable for our souls and for our bodies this day.

And, O Lord, extend the same blessings to the whole human race. We commend unto thee the poor, the needy, and the afflicted. We beseech thee to look upon those living without Christ, and reveal thy Son unto them. Pity the lost sheep of Israel, and gather them back by the good Shepherd. Thrust forth labourers into the harvest of the heathen world, so that at length all the ends of the world may remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations may worship before thee, through Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

SATURDAY EVENING FAMILY PRAYER.

Exodus xvi. 23. "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord : bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe, and that which remaineth over, lay up for you, to be kept till the morning."

O our heavenly Father, full of bounty and loving-kindness, full of truth and holiness, we thank thee that through

thy goodness we are brought to the close of another week, and the eve of another Sabbath. Surely goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of this week, and shall follow us all the days of our life : for the Lord is our Shepherd, and he is our Saviour evermore. May we lean wholly upon him, in everything acknowledge him, and always rejoice in him, who is our light and our life, our pattern and our glory.

Through the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, may we be cleansed from all sin ; both from its guilt and curse, its dominion and power, its love and pollution. Looking to the wounds and bruises of the only-begotten Son of God, endured for our sakes, and caused by our sins, may we see the tremendous evil of sin, and abhor all manner of sin with intense hatred ; and may we see thy holy love to us sinners in its unmeasurable height, and length, and depth, and breadth, and henceforth wholly confide in thee, and ardently love thee, who hast so loved us.

Prepare us for the approaching Sabbath. May we by thoughtfulness beforehand, guard against those things which might interrupt our higher duties and privileges on thy holy day. In Sabbath employments may we find our best joy and happiness : and give us so to make ready for them, that we may have that rest and spiritual refreshment which thou didst thus design for us.

Oh when shall come the rest which remaineth for the people of God ; the eternal Sabbath ; the unceasing song, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. Lord, everywhere may our fellow-men know and enjoy the happiness of remembering to keep the Sabbath day holy. Every where may thy name be honoured by unpolluted Sabbaths, and thy day be called a delight by joyful worshippers through the whole world, for Jesus our Redeemer's sake.

PRAYERS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

PRAYER FOR CONVERSION.

Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh."

O my Creator, my God, and my Redeemer, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. All my life long thou hast been doing me good, and I have been rebelling against thee, and living afar off from thee. Thus didst not spare thine own Son, but delivered him up to death, even the death of the cross, for us sinners; and yet I have neglected this great salvation, and refused all thy grace and loving-kindness, and my mind is full of evil thoughts, and my spirit full of error and uncleanness, and my heart hard as the stony rock. God be merciful to me a sinner.

Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. My only hope is in thee. Again and again I have resolved to forsake my evil ways, and again and again all my resolutions have failed, in the hour of trial, to help me. Where, then, can I look, but unto thee, who, for my sins, art most justly displeased.

O Lord God, who hast declared, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, and hast assured us that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, convert me, and make me a new creature. O Lord God, who seest me in my helplessness and misery, now, while yet the accepted time continues, and the day of salvation is prolonged, I call upon thee for mercy, I implore of thee grace. Create in me a clean heart, O God, renew a right spirit within me; cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

I plead thine own precious promises, which are all yea and amen, in Christ Jesus. Fulfil thy own words to me, and give me a new heart, and put a new spirit within me, and take the stony heart out of my flesh, and give me an heart of flesh.

O give my soul a holy longing for this great change ; give me true repentance for all my sins, and real faith in thy love, and joy in thy salvation. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways of holy love, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

O God, I am poor and needy : make haste unto me. Thou art my help and my deliverer, O Lord, make no long tarrying, but hear me speedily, for the sake of thy only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYER FOR HELP IN DIFFICULTIES.

Psalm l. 15. " Call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."

O thou mighty and glorious God, our only refuge and strength, who art a very present help in time of trouble, I come to thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, with my present trials and difficulties. I know not what to do ; I am oppressed ; undertake for me, and help me. I deserve far more evil than I receive, and more evil than I now dread, for I have greatly sinned in thy sight, and thou art both just and good in all that I suffer, and all that I fear. Lord, I put myself into thy hands, to do what is good to me in thy sight. I am sure thy name is love ; I am sure thy power is infinite ; I am sure Jesus makes intercession for transgressors, and in his name I ask of thee mercy and grace to help in this time of need. Deliver me, and enable me to glorify thy great name, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

PRAYER IN SICKNESS.

Exodus xxiii. 25. " Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and I will take away sickness from the midst of thee."

Blessed Lord, who hast told us in thy holy word that whom thou lovest thou chastenest, and that thou scourgest every son whom thou receivest,—Oh mercifully grant that all the wise purposes of love which were intended for my soul in this affliction, may be fully realised. Grant that earthly health and strength having failed, I may place more simple confidence in thee. Gracious Father, be thou my refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Thou, O merciful Jesus, hast said, that in all our afflictions thou art afflicted, may I realize thy sympathy and fellow-feeling with me. May the remembrance of thy dreadful sufferings for me check every murmur, and soothe every pain. Lord, enable me, whether in sickness or in health, to glorify thy holy name. Do with me what is good in thy sight. Let patience have her perfect work. If this sickness be unto death, O prepare me for it, that I may depart only to be with thee. If it be thy will that I recover, may I rise from a sick bed strong through thy grace to walk far more closely with my God than ever I have yet done, and this to the end of my life. I offer up every prayer through the merits and intercession of my gracious Redeemer.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS BEFORE THE BAPTISM OF THEIR CHILDREN.

Acts ii. 39. "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off: even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Almighty Father, thou art a Father full of righteousness and full of grace, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him we approach thy mercy-seat for the dear child which thou thyself hast given us. Thou hast graciously promised, I will be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee, and I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed; we come unto thee now for the fulfilment of thy gracious promises. O may we believe thy faithfulness, and rejoice in thy love. And as Jehoshaphat, before the battle, praised

the Lord, and according to his faith the victory was given to him, so may we, in the same spirit of faith, dedicating our child to thee, and bringing up our child for thee, praise thee in the assured confidence that thy grace shall be bestowed upon this our offspring. Like the poor father in the gospel, coming for help for his child, we come unto thee, saying, Lord, we believe, help our unbelief, and do thou graciously answer us according to the fulness of thy own love and grace in Christ Jesus. Lord, strengthen our faith, enliven our hope, and enable us evermore to rejoice in thee, through Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS AFTER BAPTISM OF THEIR CHILD.

Gen. xvii. 18. " O that Ishmael might live before thee."

O Lord God Almighty, in pursuance of our Saviour's gracious words, Suffer little children to come unto me, we have taken our child, in faith and prayer, unto thee ; we beseech thee give us the full blessing which we have asked, and enable us to bring up this child day by day in thy faith, and fear, and love. O make all our plans for its spiritual welfare effectual, by thy own mighty and invincible Spirit, that the old man may be daily mortified and subdued, and the new man may be quickened and strengthened to thy glory, and the everlasting salvation of our beloved child, through Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE BAPTISED CHILD COMING TO YEARS OF DISCRETION.

Rom. vi. 4. " We also should walk in newness of life."

O Lord, full of mercy and goodness, I praise thee that from my earliest infancy I was enrolled among thy people, and dedicated to thy happy service ; let me never, then, through my own unbelief and sinfulness, deprive myself of the rich blessings which thou hast so assured to me. So mightily work in me to will and to do of thy good pleasure, that I may work out my own salvation with fear and

trembling, and daily, in all my conduct, renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh, and ever keep thy holy will and commandments. Give me sure and lively faith in the great truths of thy word, and help me to continue in the same to my life's end, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

BEFORE CONFIRMATION.

Isaiah xliv. 5. "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

Almighty Father, I bless thy holy name that when I was young, I was, by the care and love of others, early consecrated to thee, and baptized in the name of Jesus. And now I desire to reap the full benefit of thine ordinance, by confirming with my own mouth what was done for me when young. Help me, by thine own Spirit, to believe with the heart all thy love in Christ Jesus. I praise thee, who hast called me to be a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. With joy of heart enable me to confess with my mouth the Lord Jesus. Let thy holy Spirit so teach me, that I may fully realize the blessings which thou hast given me in him, and yield myself, and all I am, wholly and entirely to him, who has bought me with his blood. May I joyfully suffer with him here, that I may reign with him for ever hereafter; daily taking up my cross, and following my crucified Saviour. Hear me for his great name's sake.

AFTER CONFIRMATION.

Rom. xii. 1, 2. "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world."

Lord, I am thine; keep me thine for ever; uphold my goings in thy paths to the end. Shed abroad thy love in

my heart, by the Holy Ghost, more and more; and knowing and believing the love which thou hast towards me, may that love constrain me every day not to live to myself, but to him who died for me. In the hour of temptation, succour me; amidst the scorn of evil men, sustain my soul, that I may never deny my Lord and Saviour, but ever tread his steps, and wear his image, and glory in him, till the day of his appearing and return, in the glory of his Father. Hear me for his sake.

PRAYER BEFORE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Psalm cxvi. 13. "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

O heavenly Father, who spared not thine own Son, but delivered him up for us all; O blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who hast put away my sins by the sacrifice of thyself; O Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who glorifiest Jesus, and receiving the things of Christ shewest them to us, help me to believe all the love of God, in the death of Jesus, for my sins. Help me to see most distinctly, and believe most fully, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And in deep sorrow for those sins by which Jesus was wounded and bruised, and in constant joy of faith for that great redemption which he has accomplished for us, and with full purpose of heart to walk in newness of life, may I now go to the table of the Lord, take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

Give me an entire and child-like confidence in thee, that without any of the spirit of bondage unto fear, without any presumptuous or self-righteous feelings, without careless indifference or mere formality, but with lively faith, joyful hope, and fervent love, I may, in the very spirit of adoption, go to thy table. O grant unto me, with all my brethren, thine own children, there to feed on Christ in our hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving; rejoicing in that full propitiation thou hast set forth through faith in his blood,

for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. Hear me, through Jesus my Redeemer.

PRAYER AFTER THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 Cor. x. 16. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto! That I, worthy only of thy wrath, should be made partaker of the children's bread: that I, who have been so sinful, should have assured to me thy favour, and the hope of thy glory: that I, once without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world, should be brought nigh by the blood of Jesus, and be made a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God. Never may I cease to give thanks unto thee, and to praise thy name.

Now give me, and all thy people, grace to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing others in love, and ever endeavouring to keep the unity of love in the bond of peace. May we never cast away our confidence in thee, which has such great recompence of reward. May we live by faith in the joyful hope of the coming of our Redeemer in glory to fulfil all his promises to his waiting people who look for him, and may we ever abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. O Lord, believing thy promise, give us grace to look for the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and may we never fall from this stedfast hope, but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for his name's sake. Amen.

ON A DEATH IN THE FAMILY.

Job i. 21. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The will of the Lord be done. Help us to say so from the heart, O our God, and let not one murmuring or repining thought mingle with our tears of sorrow. Thou hast told us Jesus wept; and thus, while we from the heart acknowledge thy wise and holy love in all thy ways, we may weep also at what sin has wrought. Lord, we thank thee for all the comfort we have had at any time in our departed friend. We pray thee to forgive all our sins in our past intercourse with him [or her].

Lord, sanctify to us all this affliction. May we learn every holy lesson thou didst by it design to teach us. May we see what a vapour life is, and how short our days are; and may our great and constant care hereafter be, so to believe in Jesus, and so to live to him, as to be able to welcome death as our real gain and privilege, looking forward to the return of him by whom death and the grave are swallowed up in victory. Hear us for Jesus' sake.

PRAYER FOR READINESS FOR OUR LORD'S COMING.

Matt. xxiv. 44. "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

O most gracious Lord and Master, Jesus, who hast in thy word given us so many warnings against the great danger of disregarding thy coming again, and hast so often called us to watchfulness and prayer, that we may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall then come to pass, and to stand before thee, the Son of man, I come to thee for grace thus ever to watch, and pray, and take heed, and be ready. O let me never yield to the temptation of thinking my Lord delayeth his coming, or of asking where is the promise of his coming. But may I and all thy children everywhere know thy long-suffering and thy goodness, leading us to repentance, and that the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night. And may this assurance stir up me, and all thy people, to all holy conversation and godliness, that we may be found of thee in peace, without spot and blameless.

O Lord Jesus, our great God and Saviour, raise our souls to this blessed hope of thy glorious appearing. Help us to be looking for it, and hastening unto it, and like the wise virgins, to be constantly gathering oil in our vessels, that we may be ready at whatever hour thou our Lord shall come. May thy coming be to us a hope full of joy and blessing; and may our whole souls, in answer to the promise, "Surely I come quickly," reply "Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus."

INTERCESSION FOR OTHERS.

[*The author, thinking that his readers will be both interested and profited by adopting the plan recently formed for a* General Private Union, *inserts the following account of it.*]

REGULATIONS FOR THE MEMBERS.

1. Each member of the union declares his serious intention, by the help of God, to occupy some portion of time during the course of Saturday, in every week, in private prayer upon the subjects, the heads of which are arranged at the end of these regulations, his circumstances and frame of mind permitting.

N.B.—The hour from seven to eight in the morning is suggested; but any member may adopt another, according to his circumstances.

2. If any member be hindered from fulfilling this intention on the day appointed, the first proper opportunity afterwards may be taken for the purpose, in order that the object be obtained some time in the course of the week; that is to say, before the return of the next union prayer day.

HEADS FOR PRAYER.

Agreed to be used by the Members of the General Private Prayer Union.

I. For an abundant gift of the Holy Spirit, and of his gracious influences.

II. For the purity and unity of the church of Christ.

III. For her Majesty the Queen, and all in authority under her ; and for a special blessing upon our country.

IV. That God may raise up in great numbers, fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry.

V. That a blessing may accompany the ministrations of the word of God, in order that it may have free course and be glorified.

VI. For the fulfilment of God's promises to his ancient people, the Jews.

VII. For the propagation of the gospel amongst the heathen.

VIII. For a special blessing upon all the members of the union.

The following prayer may assist the reader in carrying on this blessed object :—

GENERAL INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

1. Almighty Father, who hast graciously promised that it shall come to pass in the last days thou wilt pour out of thy Spirit upon all flesh, grant unto thy people who know the joyful sound of thy gospel, and believe and rejoice in thy love, O grant unto them with one accord, at one time, and in every place, to seek of thee the fulfilment of this most precious promise. We earnestly beseech thee to bestow thy Spirit more and more upon our fallen race, to renew everywhere the work in the hearts of men, and that his gracious and holy fruit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, and all the fruits of righteousness, may abound to thy glory.

2. O make thy people everywhere one. We earnestly seek of thee this great blessing, for which our Redeemer offered up such repeated prayer with his disciples. Remove, speedily remove, all those works of the flesh that hinder the union of thy people ; all self wisdom, pride, self-will, love of earthly things ; take away every root of bitterness, and give unto them such grace, that they may forbear one

another in love, and endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and at length become all one in Christ Jesus.

3. Bless our Sovereign Queen Victoria ; guide, sanctify, support, and comfort her. Direct the counsels of all in authority under her, and may their measures be such as shall promote thy glory, and the real welfare of our country. Look, in tender mercy, on this nation ; pardon our great sins ; spare us still, and grant that those amazing advantages which thou hast given to us, may be used for the fullest blessing of the whole earth. Prosper all the efforts, whether individual or united, of thy people, for our spiritual and for our temporal good, as a nation.

4. Raise up and send forth labourers into thy harvest. O how greatly our own land, and every Christian, and Mahommedan, and Heathen land—how greatly both Jews and Gentiles now need the faithful labourers ! O Lord choose, O Lord prepare, O Lord raise up many a vessel of mercy, to bear thy name through the earth !

5. And accompany with thy mighty grace and blessing, the ministrations of thy gospel in every land. We know and joyfully acknowledge, that all spiritual success is of thee ; all the strength of thine own word is of thee. O may it be received by every hearer, not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, that it may through the earth have free course and be glorified !

6. Especially regard thine ancient people Israel. Bless every effort for their good, every society, and every missionary labouring for their welfare. Hasten their conversion to Christ ; hasten their restoration to their own land, and their full blessedness there as a righteous nation, keeping the truth. O may Jesus speedily be the glory of his people Israel, and so the Heathen fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

7. O Lord, bring in also the fulness of the Gentiles ; shortly accomplish the number of thine elect, and hasten thy kingdom. Bless every missionary society, and every

missionary, schoolmaster, and teacher, labouring for the heathen, and every station, with every congregation, school, and convert gathered from among the heathen. May our eyes see far greater things yet done according to the fulness of thine own love ; far larger faith, zeal, love, and liberality in thy church ; a vastly wider and fuller diffusion of thy truth, and a glorious ingathering of souls through the world, preparing the earth for all thy holy will, and the speedy return of our divine Redeemer.

8. And bless all who with me unite in offering up such desires unto thee. Grant that in seeking thus to water others, each of our own souls may be watered, and refreshed, and fructified, with showers of grace and blessing, through Jesus, our great High Priest, our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SOVEREIGN AND ALL IN AUTHORITY.

Ezra vi. 10. "Pray for the life of the King."

O thou who hast commanded thy people to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men ; for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty ;—We come unto thee, O King eternal, invisible, immortal, the only wise God, in behalf of our Sovereign Victoria, the Queen of these countries, entreating thee to pour the abundance of thy grace into her heart. May she live in thy fear, and rejoice in thy favour. Be unto her a shield of protection and a robe of beauty. Amidst her many cares, let thy heavenly mercy refresh her. Amidst the slippery paths of earthly greatness, hold thou up her goings in thy ways. Let all her counsellors be guided by heavenly wisdom. Preserve them and our country from all the devices of infidel, lawless, and Papal men, and grant that those who are in authority over us may, like Nehemiah and Daniel, seek thy glory and the good of thy church, and therein the true blessedness of our country. Hear and answer for the sake of him who is the only King

of kings and Lord of lords, even Jesus our Redeemer. Amen.

FOR OUR COUNTRY.

Jer. xxix. 7. "Pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace."

O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face ; to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee ; but to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him. Thine eye has seen all the sinfulness of this guilty land—our swearing, and sabbath-breaking, and drunkenness ; our pride and vain glory ; our casting off more and more the national profession of thy truth ; thou hast beheld our love of money, and the oppressions of the great ; and the discontent, the spirit of lawlessness and insubordination of the poor ; and, above all, the general forgetfulness of thee, and the neglect of thy gospel, and our great abuse of our special and peculiar spiritual privileges. Before it be too late, give us as a nation truly to repent and turn unto God. O make us zealous for the Lord of Hosts. Multiply faithful labourers in thy church. Clothe our bishops, priests, and deacons with righteousness, and let thy saints sing for joy. Overthrow all the devices of Satan and wicked men. Bless and prosper all the efforts of thy people to do good to the bodies and souls of men. O make us a nation fearing God and working righteousness. May the vast power and commerce, wealth and dominion, and the many spiritual privileges which thou hast bestowed upon us, be consecrated to thee, and used for thy glory, and the good of our fellow-creatures, through the whole earth. Return, O our God, and bless us, and by us bless thy people Israel, and bless every land, so that thy way may be known on earth, and thy saving health among all nations, through Jesus, our Redeemer.

PRAYER FOR MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

2 Thess. iii. 1. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the

word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you."

O Lord of the harvest, who, seeing the harvest to be plenteous, and the labourers to be few, didst command thy disciples to pray that the Lord would send forth labourers into his harvest, for this I now call upon thy name. Everywhere the harvest is needing the labourers; in our own land and in foreign lands; among Jews and Gentiles, in Papal and in Mahommedan lands, how vast the harvest! Lord, prepare and call forth the labourers. Give thou the word, that great may be the company of the preachers.

And, O thou who didst ascend on high, leading captivity captive, to give gifts to men, and gavest apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers; multiply such gifts now, as the church and the world need, according to the largeness and the fulness of the grace of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

And bless very largely all who minister in holy things. Look on the bishops, priests, deacons, and ministers of thy church, everywhere. Give them increasing knowledge, love, zeal, faithfulness, patience, and perseverance. Send them help from the sanctuary, and strengthen them out of Zion. Open effectual doors of utterance for them; cause them always to triumph in thee, O Christ Jesus; and make manifest the savour of thy knowledge by them in every place, to the glory of thy righteousness and thy grace, and the salvation of innumerable souls, their joy and crown of rejoicing in thy day, O our Redeemer; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and evermore.

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

John xvii. 20, 21. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their words that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and

I in thee, that they also may be one in us ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

O that thou, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast purchased to thyself a universal church by the precious blood of thy dear Son, mercifully look upon thy people now scattered over the earth, but one in Christ, having one spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.

Everywhere multiply mercy and peace to them. By whatever name they may be distinguished here on earth, grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Peace be with all thy saints who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ through the whole world.

O heal the divisions of thy people, and so pour thy Spirit upon thy Church, that all may be of one mind and one heart, and all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Defend thy church from Antichrist in every form ; bruise Satan under our feet shortly ; may we be very bold in our God to speak the Gospel. Teach us to walk worthy of our high calling, making us the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, till we are presented faultless before thy presence with exceeding joy, in the day of the revelation of the glory of our Lord Jesus, and the full triumph of his truth and kingdom over the world. Hear us for his name's sake. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE JEWS.

Isaiah lxxii. 6, 7. " Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

O thou who hast, in such grace and love to thy people Israel, taken it as thy name and memorial unto all generations that thou art the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and who hast commanded us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, promising that they shall

prosper who love thy people, I, a sinful creature, once afar off from thee, but now brought nigh by the blood of Jesus, call upon thee for those now for a season broken off. Lord, behold them in tender mercy, return and visit them with thy salvation. We are verily guilty concerning these our brethren. Put into our hearts great love and compassion for them. Remove all the stumbling-blocks which professing Christians have laid in their way, by their fearful sins of persecution, contempt, idolatry, neglect of thy law, and unbelief of thy prophets. Give us holy sorrow for these our sins. Remove all their self-righteousness, trusting in human tradition, covetousness, partial views of thyself, and unbelief in the Son of God, and give them true repentance for their sins. Accomplish all thy gracious purposes to them. Restore them to their own land wherein their fathers dwelt. May thy servant David, even Christ our Lord, speedily be their Prince for ever, and Zion be the joy of the whole earth. Hear, O hear us, for his sake, who is the King of the Jews, who is now the light to lighten the Gentiles, and is yet to be the glory of his people Israel. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE HEATHEN.

Psalm ii. 8. "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

O my God and my Father, my daily portion and joy, my strength and my refuge in the day of trouble, according to thy gracious command I come before thee to pray for the millions whom thou hast made, and whom thou lovest as thy creatures, and whom thou wouldest have to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. I thy most sinful and unworthy creature, but loved and washed from my sins in the blood of Jesus, and made a king and a priest unto thee, my Father, encouraged by thy own blessed assurance that it is good and acceptable in thy sight, pray for all these my fellow-men.

Behold, in infinite mercy and compassion, the world lying in wickedness; behold, in righteous zeal for thy glory, Satan, the god of this world, blinding the minds of them that believe not; behold, O thou God of light, and love, and holiness, the fearful issues of sin against thee, men everywhere sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; and come speedily and succour us. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and the earnest expectation of creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, and thy children are still poor and afflicted, and the ungodly triumph. O hasten thy coming, thy kingdom, and thy glory.

Strengthen the hands, and comfort the hearts of thy servants against all their enemies. More and more weaken and destroy all the forms of evil by which Satan has deluded men, whether in heathen or Mahommedan, or Papal or Protestant lands. May Popery and superstition, infidelity and lawlessness, as well as the open idolatry of pagan countries be driven away more and more by the growing light of divine truth.

O Lord, how vast the harvest, and, though greatly multiplied, still how few yet are the labourers to gather it in! Lord of the harvest, send forth thy labourers everywhere. May the everlasting gospel fly through the earth, and all nations be prepared for thy return, thy judgment, and thy glorious kingdom.

Bless all thy ministers through the earth, and comfort and help every missionary now bearing the heat and burden of the day among Jews and Gentiles; let thy gracious work be accomplished by them in making ready a people prepared for the Lord. Thus shortly complete the number of thine elect, and hasten thy kingdom, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

THANKSGIVINGS.

THANKSGIVINGS FOR TEMPORAL BLESSINGS.

Psalm ciii. 2. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

O my God, my cup runneth over with blessings every day. Thou hast given me all things richly to enjoy. How fearfully and wonderfully am I made, and how marvellous are thy works? Every limb and every sense, every faculty of body and of mind, and every affection within, all were formed and created by thee for my good. Thou hast given me life and food for my life: body, and raiment for that body; and what a provision hast thou made, not merely for my subsistence, but for my growth in knowledge and happiness day by day. O how full are the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and all that are therein, of thy wisdom and righteousness, thy grace and loving-kindness! How hast thou stored every thing with gracious proofs of the unsearchable riches of thy love to us!

And when I look at my sinfulness and utter unworthiness of the least of all thy mercies, and that in Christ Jesus all things whatsoever are working together for good to them that love thee, O what praises are due to thee from whom alone comes every good and perfect gift! All thanks and glory be to thee. May my life shew forth thy praise. Preserve me from ever forgetting to whom I owe all my mercies, and give me a heart to use every thing entrusted to me to the glory of thee, the Giver, and the good of my fellow-men, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR NATIONAL MERCIES.

Deut. iv. 8. "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous."

Who can count, O our God, all thy mercies to those British Isles of the sea in which we live? How great is

the sum of thy goodness ! The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. He raised us up out of our low estate of barbarism, and from all the idolatry of our pagan forefathers. He gave us the light of his gospel in the beginning of its blessed course, and when we abused that light, and sunk deep in papal darkness, in the fulness of his love, the same glorious light was, at the Reformation, freely again given to us. He has made us the first of the nations in power and influence, colonies and commerce, and growing prosperity and dominion : and our land is the land of Bibles, and the seat of missions, and the storehouse of blessings for the earth. O amazing grace to such a rebellious nation ! May we know now at length the things which belong to our peace ; may we at last hearken to God's commandments, that our peace may be as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea. O teach us to whom we owe all our mercies, and the great trust given to us with them. Teach us to give thee glory for all, by truly repenting of all our national iniquities. Raise us to that blessedness which thou hast set before us, to be a full blessing to Jews and Gentiles, even to all the nations of the earth, every where holding forth that word of life, which thou hast given to us, through Jesus the only light of life.

THANKSGIVING FOR A GOOD HARVEST.

Psalm lxv. 13. " The valleys also are covered over with corn : they shout for joy, they also sing.

How good art thou, O Lord, in the continued bounties of thy providence from age to age ! Faithful is thy covenant made with Noah of old ; while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. What a gracious provision hast thou again made for the wants of thy needy creatures all over our land ! And this, notwithstanding all our great sinfulness and continual rebellion against thee. May so much goodness at length melt and subdue our hearts, and bring us to be thy willing and obe-

dient people. O may these witnesses of thy power and loving-kindness, in thus doing us good, in giving us rain from heaven when it was needed, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness, lead us to repentance and to forsake every evil way. May we ever keep in mind that day of the Lord which comes as a thief, and that final harvest and reaping of the earth, and the separation of the righteous from the wicked, so quickly approaching us all ; and may we now so come to thee by Jesus Christ, trusting in him as our only Saviour, and living to him who died for us, that we may be accepted of thee on that day, and be numbered with thy people, and gathered safe home into thy heavenly kingdom with shoutings of everlasting joy, through Jesus our Redeemer.

THANKSGIVING OF PARENTS ON THE BIRTH OF A CHILD.

1 Sam. i. 27. "For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him."

Almighty Father, how can we thank thee enough for thy great goodness to us ? Thou hast been very gracious to us, in carrying thy handmaid through the hour of trouble and sorrow, and we remember no more our sorrow, for joy in this fresh gift of thy love. Lo ! children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord. All praise and glory be to thee ! What a trust hast thou given to us ! a never-dying soul, born of us its sinful parents, and by nature, through our sin, evil, yet redeemed by the blood of Christ, and with full provision made by thee, in Jesus and in the gift of thine own Spirit, for its everlasting salvation, and final glory in thy heavenly kingdom. What a seed of blessing to others also may this child be ! How weighty our responsibility and duty ! Lord, from its birth we devote it to thee. Lord, sanctify our little one from the womb. Give us grace to bring it to thy holy baptism in faith and prayer, and ever to train it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Bless it and make it a blessing, now and evermore, through Jesus our Redeemer.

THANKSGIVING FOR RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.

Psalm ciii. 3. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases."

O thou who didst graciously promise to thy people of old, "Behold I will bring health and cure, and I will cure them," I come unto thee with a grateful heart for all thy great goodness in removing this sickness, and restoring afresh the health of the body. Thou hearest and answerest the prayer of them that call upon thee in the day of trouble; thou preservest the afflicted; I give thee alone all the praise; the skill of the physician, and the virtue of medicine, and the kindness of friends, and the provision for our wants, all come first from thee, and to thy name be glory.

O Lord, restore my soul; revive the work of thy grace in my heart; let my fresh strength be devoted wholly to thy service. Let the healing of the body be also the healing of the soul; through thy abounding grace give new life, health, and strength for my soul, that all my backslidings healed, I may with an enlarged heart run in the way of thy commandments, through Jesus, my Redeemer. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.

Ephes. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings."

O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. How wonderful is thy loving-kindness to the children of men! I praise and magnify thy holy name, that thou so loved the world as to give thine only-begotten Son to take our nature, and die for us, and thus, in the surest and fullest way, prove thy love to all men. I praise thee for the gift of the Holy Spirit to be my daily Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter. What treasures of

love are here ! Innumerable are thy spiritual benefits : thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my paths ; thy ministers are given for my edification ; thy house and day for fuller fellowship with thee and thy people. For those special means of grace and pledges of love, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, all thanks and praise be to thee.

Thou hast redeemed me, called me, justified me, adopted me, and sanctified me ; daily thou upholdest my goings in thy path, and sparest and helpest me ; thou hast given me eternal life, and the hope of sharing my Redeemer's glory in his heavenly kingdom.

And what can I render unto the Lord for all his benefits ? O ever give me simple faith in thy loving-kindness, a grateful reception of thy truth, and a heart devoted in all things to thy glory, through Jesus my Redeemer. Amen.

CHAPTER XXI.

HINTS FOR PRAYER.

The following Heads of Prayer for assisting the recollection in our devotions, having been found to be useful for that purpose, are added at the close of this work.

1. THANKS FOR MERCIES.

1 Thess. v. 8. *In every thing give thanks.*

Each hour's good
Each day's
My whole life.

Temporal.
Being, birth, nature, members, faculties, senses, preservation, food, health, clothing, education, home, possessions.

Works of Creation.
Heaven, earth, sea, creatures, variety, beauty, usefulness, fruitfulness,

Works of Art.
Ease, comfort, countless benefits.

Spiritual.
Gift of Christ,
Gift of Spirit,
God my Father,
Known in Christ,
Church of Christ,
Redemption,
Calling, conversion,
Justification,
Adoption, comfort,
Sanctification,
Joy, perseverance,
Election.

Means of Grace.
Scriptures, abundance, sureness, fulness, and clearness.
Ministers of word,
Baptism, Lord's Supper,
Christian fellowship,
pious books, friends.

Church of England.
Doctrines, ministry,
Liturgy, churches,
Establishment.

Providential.
Light and air, sun and rain, day and night, heat and cold, seed time, harvest, prosperity, trials.

Special mercies.
Deliverance, recovery, upholding, peculiar, in past life.

Blessing to others.
Being made so,
Seeing their good.

Family blessings.
Provision, protection, love, sympathy, parents, children, servants, master, friends.

National blessings.
Religion, peace, safety, freedom.

Prospective Good.
Return of Christ,
His kingdom,
Joy of creation,
Eternal life.

The Giver.
How great, good, wise, righteous, holy, forbearing, and forgiving.

The Multitude.
Countless, constant.

The Receiver.
Unworthy, misusing, most sinful.

II. CONFESSION OF SINS.

1 John i. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Against the Law.
Not loving God,
Not loving man,
Self-seeking.

Against the Gospel.
Impenitence,
Unbelief,
Disobedience.

As to God.
His presence, truth, power, righteousness, grace, wisdom, love, not duly regarded, nor glorified.

As to Christ.
His person, will, work, life, glory, not looked to, loved, followed, obeyed.

As to the Spirit.
Not duly sought, led by, depended on, but grieved and provoked, and quenched.

Conscience.
Slighted, made dull.

Easily besetting Sin. Self-denial.
wanting, in food, ease, studies, honour; ungodliness, and worldly lusts.

Conversation.
light and vain, idle, man-pleasing.

Filthiness of spirit.
Pride, vanity, wrath, strife, self-will, envy, jealousy, lies, impatience.

Filthiness of flesh.
sensual, impure.

Life.
not sober, righteous, godly.

Scriptures.
not duly prized, believed, read, prayed over.

Devotions.
want of faith and fervency; formal, dull, reluctant, inconstant, omitted.

Public Worship.
wanderings, irreverence.

Baptism.
unimproved, vows broken, good lost.

Lord's Supper.
unpreparedness, formality, self-righteousness, no faith nor love.

Parish, neighbours, friends—their good not sought, want of care, love, bounty. Ill-will, evil-speaking.

Aggravation.
light, mercies, greatness, number.

III. PETITION FOR GOOD.

Psalm lxxxi. 10. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*

Knowledge of truth.
Belief, love of it.
Repentance for sin.
Free, full pardon.
Confidence in God.
Victory over sin.
Law, delight in, conformity to.
Gospel believed, obeyed, welcomed, and rejoiced in.
God; his holy love, known, believed, shed abroad, God walked with, his will mine.
Christ received, abided, rejoiced in, followed, all in all.

Spirit, to guide, dwell in, sanctify, comfort, gladden.
Holiness, inward, outward, all acts of.
Thoughts, wise, scriptural, peaceful.
Affections, pure, holy, spiritual, heavenly.
Words, true, kind, right, and edifying.
Actions, upright, becoming gospel, steady, diligent, abounding in good.
Grace sufficient.

Victory over Satan.

Word of Christ.
dwelling richly in me, a lamp, a light, delight in, regulating all.
Conscience, pure.
Tempers, meek, humble, loving, patient, holy.
Faith, living, strong, conquering.
Hope, assured.
Charity, unfailing.

Fruits of the Spirit
richly produced.
Good Works.
2 Peter i. 4—7.
Self-denial, grace

to crucify the flesh, not preferring self nor indulging self.

Spirit of prayer. praise, joy, and glory.
Special love to God's people.
Real love to all men, to enemies.
Usefulness, as salt of earth, as light of the world. By example, words, writing, publishing, giving.
Enlarged good to family, neighbours, church.

Temptations resisted, overcome.

Relative Duties.
Minister, hearer, husband, wife, master, servant, parent, child, brother, sister, friend, neighbour, ruler, subject.
Grace to fulfil each
Fasting, grace for
New covenant.
Laws put in mind, written in heart,
God a God to us,
we to him a people,
all knowing him, sins not remembered.
God's mercy.

Earthly Good.
End. God's glory.

Day of Christ.
Watchfulness for praying always, not overcharged, looking, waiting for it, hasting to it, all ready for him.

Second coming.
Loving his appearing,
Even so come.
God all in all.

IV. INTERCESSION FOR OTHERS.

1 Tim. ii. 1. *Intercession made for all men.*

Family, good of husband, wife, parents, children, inmates, servants, bodily and spiritual.
Relations.
husband's parents, wife's parents, brothers and families, sisters and families, distant relatives,
God-children, guardians, orphans.
Friends, A. B. C.
Neighbours, D. E. F.
Parish: minister, leading families, church officers, civil officers, teachers, schools, church-goers, communicants, young, aged, poor, healthy, sick, widows, dying.
Careless, opposers, wickedest, parish societies, oneness.

Church of Christ.
Revival, healing of divisions, increase and full glory.

Church of England.
Bishops, priests, deacons, members, make all faithful: my own bishop.
For its purity, removal of offences, usefulness and diffusiveness.
Safety from foes.

Dissenters.
Grace with all that love Christ.
Restored union.

Seasons.
Fasts, festivals, baptisms, confirmation, Lord's Supper.
Visitations.

Our Country.
Queen, royal family, parliament, Queen's council, princes, nobles, rulers, magistrates, merchants, prisoners, poor.
Power devoted to God's glory.
His church helped, his name honoured.
Britain a blessing to all nations.

Our Universities.
Heads, professors.
Tutors, members, students, constant springs of good.

Schools, Colleges.
Christian truth.
Faith and practice.
Sound knowledge.

Religious Societies.
Home, continent, world at large, Jews, Bible, missionary, reformation, church societies, Irish, sailors, book and tract, benevolent, education, hospital, asylum, all aiming to do good to body or soul.

Unchristian World.
Jews, conversion, peace, restoration, missionaries to.
Gentiles, great ingathering, sending labourers, those now preaching.

Kingdom of Christ.
Hasten it daily, constant growth, destroy anti-Christ, overthrow Satan, remove prejudices, Jewish, Christian; bring in Jews, remove Pagan idolatry, Mahomedan darkness.
Overthrow popery, infidelity, lawlessness, deliver oppressed, sanctify judgment, pour out the Spirit on all flesh, fill the earth with the glory of Christ, let all creation be soon joyful and glad in him for ever.

V. SPECIAL ON THE SABBATH.

Isaiah lviii. 12. *Call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord.*

Sins.
Formal worship, worldly converse, vain thoughts, ministerial sins, people's sins, indolence, pleasure.

Wants.
God's presence, worship in spirit, fellowship with Christ, large gift of Spirit, quickening, reviving, growth in grace, communion of saints, power of word, sacraments.

Mercies.
The sabbath, house of God, preached gospel, church ordinances, free access, quiet rest, public protection, Protestant truth, fulness of word.

Intercession.
All ministers, all congregations, decayed churches, newly planted churches, those absent, those in Jewish, Heathen, Papal, and Mahomedan destitution, my own minister and church, places without the gospel.

VI. HINTS MORE PARTICULAR AND PERSONAL.

Matt. v. 6. *Pray to thy Father which is in secret.*

CONFESSION.
Sins dearest to us.
Psalm xviii. 23.
Matt. v. 29, 30.
Heb. xi. 1.

PETITION.
More pressing wants.
Of body, 1 Kings viii. 33—45.
Of soul, Psalm xxxviii.

THANKSGIVING.
Remarkable mercies.
Deut. v. 15. vii. 18. viii. 3.

INTERCESSION.
Names in family.

Names of relations.

Names of God-children.

Names of friends.

Names of neighbours.

Names of Places.

Special public dangers.

Names of Religious Societies.

Names of Missions and Missionaries.

Our own plans of doing good.

Subjects of prayer 'in Private Prayer Union,' on Saturday, from 7 to 8 morning.

1. Gift of Spirit.
2. Unity, purity of church of Christ.
3. Queen, rulers, country.
4. Sending ministers to preach.
5. Blessing on the ministry of word.
6. Promises to Jews.
7. Propagation of the Gospel among the heathen.
8. Blessings on all the members of the Union.

I.—INDEX TO FORMS OF PRAYER AND PRAISE.

1. *List of Scripture Prayers*, 379

2. *Preparation for Prayer and Praise.*

For the grace of prayer, 319
For enlargement of mind, 322
For watchfulness, 325
For fervency, 332
For a thankful spirit, 335, 338
To be delivered from mere form, 376

3. *Private Prayer.*

Morning, 382
Noonday, 384
Evening, 385
Litany, 387
Morning for a labourer, 389
Evening for a labourer, 390
For a labourer's wife, 391
For husband and wife together, 391
For a servant, 392
For a youth, 393
For a little child, 394
A child's morning prayer, 394
A child's evening prayer, 395
Private Sunday morning, 395
Private Sunday evening, 396

4. *Family Prayers.*

Prayers from the American Episcopal Liturgy, 397
Short family prayers, 405
Sunday morning, 405
Sunday evening, 407
Monday morning, 407
Monday evening, 408
Tuesday morning, 409
Tuesday evening, 410
Wednesday morning, 411
Wednesday evening, 412
Thursday morning, 413
Thursday evening, 414
Friday morning, 415
Friday evening, 416
Saturday morning, 417
Saturday evening, 418

5. *For special occasions.*

Before reading the Bible, 14
After reading the Bible, 15
For conversion, 420
For help in difficulties, 421
In sickness, 422
For parents before baptism, 423
For parents after baptism, 423
For the baptized child, 423
Before confirmation, 424
After confirmation, 424
Before the Lord's Supper, 425
After the Lord's Supper, 426
On a death in a family, 426
For readiness for our Lord's coming, 427

6. *Times of Affliction and Conflict.*

To discern God's design, 278
Rightly to receive it, 282
For its healing, 285
Conviction of sin, 288
Aid in Christian warfare, 291
For its benefits, 293
For victory with Christ, 295

7. *For Graces and Blessings.*

Conformity to God's will, 15
To know God, 22
Communion with God, 41
A new heart, 57
To profit by creation, 60
To see our needy state, 106
For the Holy Ghost, 141, 185
His farther outpouring, 143
For spiritual life, 176
To look at things unseen, 190
Growth in grace, 193
A waiting spirit, 205
Christian experience, 207
Poverty of spirit, 212
Purity in heart, 224, 257
Christian graces, 228
Repentance, 231
Faith, 241, 245
Holiness, 257
Fulfilling relative duties, 262
Divine strength, 270
To know Christ, 302
For Christian joy, 305
That joy may be our strength, 305
For a large view of God's mercies, 322, 338

8. *On the Ten Commandments.*

To know God's law, 359—373

1st 363
2nd.....366
3rd.....367
4th.....368
5th.....369
6th.....370
7th.....371
8th.....372
9th.....373
10th.....373

9. *Intercession.*

General Intercessory prayer, 429
For the Queen, 431
For our country, 432
For ministers of the gospel, 432
For the church of Christ, 433
For the Jews, 434
For the heathen, 435

10. *Thanksgivings.*

For God's works, 49
For spiritual mercies, 73
For God's love, 249
For Christ's intercession, 249
For the Holy Spirit, 163
For helps in prayer, 329
Scripture Thanksgivings, 381
For temporal blessings, 437
For national mercies, 437
For a good harvest, 438
On the birth of a child, 439
For recovery from sickness, 440
For spiritual blessings, 440

11. *Hints on Prayer,* 442

II.—GENERAL INDEX.

Advocate, 115
Affections to God, 258
to man, 261
Afflictions, 271; prayer in, 278
American family prayer, 397
Apostles' Creed, 342
Baptism, 333; prayers for, 423
Bible, 1; Contents, 5; Rules for, 13; subjects of, 20; prayers on reading, 15, 16
Birth, thanks for, 439
Children's duties, 262; prayers for, 393
Christ, 346; our life, 165; joy, 299; coming, 427
Christian hope, 199; graces, 208; holiness, 250
——— privilege, 187
Church, Catholic, 353
Commandments, 356
Comfort, 121
Communion of saints, 353
Confession of unholiness, 267
Confirmation, prayer for, 424
Conflict, 286; prayers in, 291
Conformity to God, 15
Conversion, prayer for, 420
Conviction of sin, 286
Corruption of man, 165
Country, prayer for, 432
Creation, 42
Creed, 342
Crucifixion, 349
Darkness, time of, 297
Death, prayer on, 426
Defects of holiness, 264
Election, 96
Enlargement of prayer, 307
Everlasting praise, 339; life, 355
Examples of faith, 239
Experience, prayer for, 207
Faith, 229; prayer for, 241
Fall of man, 52, 165
Family prayers, 397
Fellow-men, prayer for, 321
Fervency, prayer for, 332
Forgiveness of sins, 98
Forms, mere, prayer on, 376
Friday, prayer for, 415
God, 21; names of, 28; our salvation, 34; communion with, 38
Governors' duties, 262
Graces, Christian, 208
Grace of prayer, 400
Growth in grace, prayer for, 193
Harvest, good thanks for, 438
Hearers, 262
Heart, new prayer for, 57
Heathen, prayer for, 435
Heaven, 351
Hell, 350
Help for prayer, 325; for praise, 335
High Priest, 112
Holiness, 250; prayer for, 257
Holy Spirit, 124; names of, 141; work of, 144; prayer for, 185
Hooker quoted, 170
Hope, Christian, 199
Hungering after righteousness, 217
Husbands, 262; prayer of, 391
Inspiration, 148
Intercession of Christ, 103, 110, 119
Intercessory prayer, 429
Jehovah, 28
Jesus (see Christ), 346
Jews, 4, prayer for, 434
Joy, 296
Judgment, 352

Knowledge of God, 22
——— of Christ, 302
Labourers, prayer for, 390
Life in Christ, 165
Litany, 387
Lord's Supper, 184, prayers for, 425
Masters' duties, 262
Means of faith, 243; holiness, 267
Mediator, 115
Meek, 215
Mercies, God's 321; prayer on, 338
Merciful, 220
Ministers, prayer for, 432
Miracles, 18
Monday, prayer for, 407
Mourners, 213
Names of God, 28
National mercies, 437
New birth, 98, 134
Objects of faith, 223
Outpouring of Spirit, 143
Parables, 17
Parents' duties, 262; prayers, 422
Peace-makers, 225
Poor in spirit, 210; prayer for, 212
Praise, 333
Prayer, 315; private prayer, 382
Predestination, 194
Privileges, Christian, 187; children, 191; young, 191; fathers, 192
Proofs of faith. 241
Providence, 62
Psalms, 16
Pure in heart, 222; prayer for, 224
Queen, prayer for, 431
Recovery, thanks for, 440
Redeemer, 85, 200
Redemption, 83, 93
Regeneration, 146, 232
Relative duties, 262; prayer on, 262
Repentance, 229; prayer for, 231
Renewing, 234
Resurrection, 201, 358
Reward of prayer, 330
Reynolds, Bishop, 117
Risen life, 179
Sanctification, 99, 152
Saturday's prayer, 417
Self-examination, 327
Sermon on Mount, 208
Servants' duties, 262; prayer, 392
Sins, 354
Son of God, 346
Spiritual life, 169; its varied state, 190; prayer on, 176
Spiritual blessings, thanks for, 440
Strength, divine, prayer for, 270
Sunday morning and evening, 405
Thankful spirit, prayer for, 335
Thanksgiving, 161, 249, 381, 401
Thursday, prayer for, 413
Trinity, 124
Triumphs of faith, 246
Tuesday, prayer for, 409
Victory of the soul, 293
Virgin Mary, 348
Waiting spirit, prayer for, 205
Wants, 321
Warfare, inward, 288
Watchfulness, 322
Wednesday, prayer for, 411
Wives, duties, 262; prayers, 391
Work of the Holy Spirit, 144
Youth's prayer, 393

THE END.

[L. S. Ivy, Thames Ditton.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01147 3883